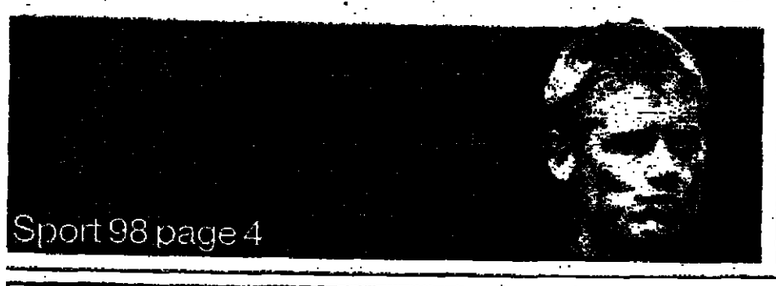
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Friday
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Britain's newspaper for Europe

THE UNIVERSITY OF JORDAN

The Guardian EUROPE



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Iraq's deputy prime minister, Tareq Aziz, yesterday: 'We don't see any light at the end of the tunnel. There is a tunnel after the tunnel' PHOTOGRAPH: KARIM SAHIB

Saddam's last chance

Military build-up continues in Gulf

Ian Black in London and Julian Borger in Washington

PRESIDENT Saddam Hussein still has a chance to back down in the crisis over United Nations weapons inspections, the United States and Britain signalled yesterday. But they continued to bolster military forces in the Gulf region in preparation for air strikes that could be launched against Iraq without further warning.

Leaders and officials in Washington and London said compliance with UN resolutions would avert punishment, as a defiant Iraq again demanded an end to seven years of international economic sanctions.

"We don't see any light at the end of the tunnel," complained the deputy prime minister, Tareq Aziz. "There is a tunnel after the tunnel."

President Bill Clinton's spokesman described Iraq as "completely isolated" after eight Arab states — Egypt, Syria and six Gulf countries — yesterday urged Baghdad to back down, in a message that implied they will acquiesce in US-led attacks if it does not.

Joe Lockhart, the White House spokesman, said: "The closest neighbours of Saddam Hussein made a clear statement that he is in violation and he must change his course and he alone ... is responsible for the consequences of his non-compliance" with the UN's regime of weapons monitoring in Iraq.

And as the US military build-up continued, opposition sources said they had reports from Baghdad that special units loyal to the Iraqi leader had been deployed across the city to forestall unrest.

In London, Tony Blair warned again that President Saddam's time was running out. "The next step is action if he is not prepared to come back into compliance," he said.

George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, said: "If he continues to defy world opinion, there will be an inevitability, a sad inevitability about force being used."

Yesterday's military build-up saw a dozen B-52 bombers and an equal number of F-117 stealth fighters moving from bases in Louisiana, North Dakota, New Mexico and California toward the island base and staging post of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, US Air Force spokesmen said.

On Diego Garcia, a British dependency used as an American base, they will sit poised to move on to the Gulf. The latest wave of aircraft add to 129 planes dispatched on Wednesday, when 3,000 additional soldiers were also sent.

As crisis meetings were held across Whitehall, the Foreign Office told all British nationals, including journalists, to leave Iraq as soon as possible. And it insisted that Western ultimatums to Iraq's leadership were now no longer "necessary or helpful".

Trying to keep the upper hand in the propaganda war, the Government also sent a three-page briefing to MPs saying Baghdad was only weeks away from making biological weapons and might still have Scud missiles.

But officials said that Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, still planned to visit the Middle East to rally support next Monday — which would be unlikely if military action were imminent.

Overall, indications yesterday were of two governments prepared to use force, but unsure of its consequences and unable to answer the key question: if President Saddam does give way and allow weapons inspections to resume, as he seemed to do last February, who can guarantee that the whole cycle of Iraqi obstruction and Western threat will not all happen again?

US officials stressed there was still time to avert air-strikes if the Iraqi leader rescinded his October 31 decision to cut off co-operation with UN weapons inspectors. Baghdad is demanding that the Security Council take steps towards lifting sanctions, imposed in 1990 when its troops invaded Kuwait.

"We are not in a rush to use military force," said the state department's James Rubin. "We have given Iraq chance after chance, time after time to come back into compliance."

British diplomats also signalled that they do not accept the view, held by some US officials, that the UN special commission that was monitoring Iraq's weapons, Unscom, has outlived its usefulness and should be abandoned in favour of policy aimed at forcing a change of regime in Baghdad.

Iraqi opposition sources said that any air strikes would have to be hard and sustained to shake, let alone topple, the regime. "The mood in Baghdad is mixed," said one well-informed opposition activist. "If you exclude supporters of the regime, some oppose attacks because they believe it will only deepen their suffering. Others want attacks thinking that it will bring about Saddam's end."

● Israel opened 24-hour depots for the distribution of gas masks yesterday, though it said the chances Baghdad would attack were "very low".

Iraq crisis, page 9
Leader comment, page 18



Israelis go through gas drill in Tel Aviv yesterday

Labour gag on NEC members

**Michael White
Political Editor**

LABOUR is preparing to crack the disciplinary whip over potential rebels on the party's new-look national executive committee with a code of conduct designed to stifle policy clashes in the media.

In advance of next Tuesday's first session of the expanded NEC, the party's incoming general secretary, Margaret McDonagh, is seeking to bind NEC members to unprecedented rules that would require them to inform the party's press office "before discussing NEC business with the media".

Though her draft code of conduct explicitly states it "will not be used to suppress or silence debate on the NEC" it is bound to be seen as a warning to the four new left-wing constituency members.

Tony Blair is already embroiled in fresh allegations of "control freak" instincts by staff at Downing Street and the party's headquarters at Millbank over candidate selection in Wales, Scotland and the looming contest for London's mayor.

He will not have known of the formidable Ms McDonagh's text, which was raising eyebrows among loyalist NEC members as well as would-be rebels last night.

The text, which may be toned down on Tuesday, calls on NEC members to avoid discussing staff issues, finance, membership or election planning outside the forum. They should also "agree to inform the party press office, and to seek their advice, when appropriate, before discussing NEC business with the media".



The document also calls on colleagues not only to respect confidential discussions but also to "do nothing which will aid our political opponents and to avoid undermining public confidence in the integrity and honesty of party staff, other NEC members and Labour Party members in general".

In return, Labour's famously disciplined press office will respond to their requests for advice within 30 minutes, offering it "freely and without prejudice" — while taking care to promote what Ms McDonagh calls "the views of the NEC as a whole".

That almost certainly means that the overwhelmingly Blairite view on the NEC should prevail. But the 33-strong committee contains trade union officials and other members — including at least 10 new ones this year — with independent opinions which may make up for the disappearance of Old Labour stalwarts such as Dennis Skinner, Ken Livingstone and Diane Abbott. They were vi-

turn to page 2, column 3

Parents to sue council over sex abuse at nursery

Peter Hetherington

PARENTS of young children who suffered systematic sexual abuse at a nursery in Newcastle upon Tyne were last night planning to sue the city council for substantial damages after an independent report outlined a string of failures by the authority.

After a lengthy investigation, following the collapse of a child abuse trial involving two nursery nurses, a four-strong inquiry team said toddlers had been taken away from the nursery for short periods — and it hinted broadly that a paedophile ring was in operation.

The team said that as well as the two nurses at the centre of the affair, Christopher Lillie and Dawn Reed, it was clear that others outside the nursery were involved in abusing children "for their own gratification and probably also for production of pornographic materials".

They added: "These people have not been found."

With 84 children affected by abuse at the Shieldfield nursery, and 494 formal complaints made against the council's social services department, Clare Routledge, solicitor representing 27 families, said they now intend to pursue compensation claims for all the children affected and are preparing legal action against the council.

She said: "We plan to take action against Newcastle city council for alleged negligence in the management and procedures at the nursery.

"What we have at present is a paedophiles' charter. Paedophiles are sophisticated people and they know how to target their victims and escape justice."

Mr Lillie and Ms Reed, believed still to be living in the North-east, and still registered as nursery nurses, walked free from Newcastle crown court in 1994 when a judge ruled that video evidence from one child was inadmissible.

The NSPCC said last night the law had since been tightened up. The law now clearly stated that evidence from a child should be heard, regardless of age, if an "intelligible testimony" could be made. But it said further improvements were still needed so that children could give evidence through an intermediary if necessary, and called for their inclusion in a forthcoming Criminal Justice Bill.

Last night Northumbria police said they had no plans at this stage to launch another inquiry "unless further evidence becomes available".

The leader of the inquiry team, Richard Barker, spoke of evidence pointing to widespread abuse in the Newcastle case after an initial perception that it involved only a small group of children.

He warned that issues raised in the case had wider implications for the country as a whole.

The report highlighted a "lack of guidance, procedures not being followed, poor practice, bad management and poor co-ordination" in the city council, although it said procedures had since been tightened considerably.

Remarks that rang alarm bells, page 5

WILL YOU HELP SAVE CHILDREN IN CENTRAL AMERICA?



In the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch, thousands of children desperately need your help. As diseases like cholera and dysentry spread like wildfire in the contaminated waters, it is children who are most at risk. UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, is delivering emergency aid, and heading efforts to restore clean water supplies in Honduras. But we need your help. We must get medicines, clean water, food and blankets to many more children now and provide long-term support so families can rebuild their lives in the days, weeks and months ahead. Please send a gift to help save children in Central America.

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UK news
Schools could be funded partly by their results for the first time since 1860, infuriating the teaching unions.
Page 3

International
Britain and the US are once again marching unsupported towards war with Iraq, with only Denmark offering token support.
Page 9

Our e-mail address for editorial comments is geurope@guardian.co.uk

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Tomorrow *The* **Guardian EUROPE** offers the complete package including Saturday, the section which brings you book reviews, arts, interviews and features for the weekend. Plus six pages of sport.

+ European weather + Television and Radio + Crosswords + Cartoons + Britain's best columnists

Sketch

Rumble of revolt from Death Row



Simon Hoggart

IT WAS, I suppose, a historic occasion. For a whole century now, the powers of the House of Lords have been steadily dribbling away.

Yesterday, on the eve of the greatest reform since 1911, they started a process that could destroy a Commons bill. Like transportation for stealing a sheep, this is not supposed to happen now.

Opponents of the death penalty argue that someone who already faces hanging will be more willing to kill again before he is caught. The Lords seem determined to prove them right.

The place was packed. Frail, white-haired peers who were already elderly when their fathers died rubbed shoulders with television presenters, advertising men and all the other riff-raff who have arrived in recent years.

They crammed themselves against the benches, sat round the steps of the throne, and perched on the giant red pouffes in the middle.

One of these days, the hereditary peerage will be told to choose its last meal (mulligatawny, steak and kidney pud, scotch woodcock). Then it will be taken briskly to the scaffold where the silken rope awaits. In the meantime, it lives on in the world's most luxurious Death Row.

Their lordships have started getting frisky. In the past, if two peers stood up at the same time, they would go into an elaborate "after you, Claude" act which often led both of them to sit down again. Now both remain standing, and the assembled ranks murmur, increasingly loud, the name of the one they want to hear.

This is the equivalent of MCC members at Lord's throwing beer cans on the pitch.

There was even some booing when the Leader of the House, Margaret Jay, tried to insist on one Labour peer speaking instead of another. This is the equivalent of the members setting fire to the Long Room.

Their topic was the European Elections Bill, and in particular the Government's insistence on a "closed list" system of proportional representation.

Under this method, voters are entitled to choose their favourite party. The actual candidates, however, will be selected — and ranked in order — by party apparatchiks, who will, the Lords assume, go for cowed, safe folk who will do as they're told by party HQ.

A few peers said that, however much they might dislike the closed list and its connotations, the Commons had voted for it three times, and by large majorities. In theory at least, it represented the will of the people.

In practice, it represents the will of the control freaks who run the modern Labour Party. No wonder it had a majority of 182 when it last came to the Commons this week: zombies will always vote for more zombies.

In the Lords, almost nobody could be found to support the closed list. The Tory spokesman, Lord Mackay, gave a dry, witty speech in which he sarcastically welcomed the Government's one concession: a review of the system.

"Mr Dale Campbell-Savours said that this will be welcomed by people across the country. Your lordships may have noticed the bonfires lit across the country last week."

He quoted the Mirror, which had described supporters of the closed list as "craven Blairite numpties", technical language rarely heard in the Lords.

Lord Shore, a former Labour cabinet minister, made a ringing denunciation of the closed list. "This is not a matter of Lords versus Commons. It is accountability to the voters against accountability to a party committee. It is the electorate against the selectorate!"

A faint gurgling rumble, a murmur like the start of a distant avalanche, could just be discerned. It was the sound of their lordships cheering.

The Earl of Onslow was mortified at being told he must be wrong because he was a hereditary peer. "I'm not a half-wit because I'm a hereditary peer. I may *be* a half-wit, but it's not because I'm a hereditary peer."

Two hours later they slung the closed list out for the third and probably final time. They're barricaded in the old shack now, shouting: "If you want to see your bill again, you'll have to come and get me, Blair!"

Commons must not go soft on punishing rule-breakers, warns parliamentary watchdog's last report

Parting shot from Downey

David Hencke
Westminster Correspondent

THE media campaign to expose the cash-for-questions scandal has broken the corrupting influence of lobbyists in Parliament, Sir Gordon Downey, the retiring Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, concludes in his farewell report published yesterday.

But he warns the Commons Committee on Standards and Privileges to guard against imposing soft penalties on erring ministers and MPs who break parliamentary rules.

Sir Gordon, who is 70 and steps down at the end of the month, was appointed by Parliament in the wake of the cash-for-questions scandal involving the disgraced Tory ministers Neil Hamilton and Tim Smith.

He says in his final report: "There is little doubt that Nolan [the peer whose report set up the new procedures] was right to regard financial relationships between members and lobbyists as a potentially corrupting influence.

"Many of the troubles encountered by Michael Grylls, Tim Smith, Neil Hamilton, Michael Brown and Andrew Bowden [all Tory MPs who lost their seats or retired at the last election] were largely attributable to their association with Ian Greer Associates [the now defunct lobbying company] acting on behalf of Mohamed Al Fayed. It may be that there were similar networks involving lobbyists and members on behalf of Lonrho and perhaps other organisations which never came to light.

"To the best of my knowledge, the financial links with lobbyists have now been broken. Some non-financial links are proving embarrassing but at least the spectre of cash for influence through this route has fallen away." Sir Gordon criticises the committee for not condemning Mr Hamilton for accepting cash from Mr Fayed.

Sir Gordon describes Mr Hamilton's subsequent unchallenged appearance before MPs as producing "no new evidence" and being "grotesquely misleading". He says no MP should be allowed to do this again unless there is to be a full rehearing of the case. Turning to more recent cases he points out the need for consistency in future judgments.

> 'To the best of my knowledge, the financial links with lobbyists have now been broken'
>
> **Sir Gordon Downey (right)**



"The penalty which stands out as relatively severe is that applied to Robert Wareing [the Labour MP for Liverpool, West Derby suspended for a week after not declaring a paid directorship]. The reason, I think, was that the new committee wanted to establish a 'no nonsense' precedent on an early case but has subsequently attached greater weight to precedents set by its predecessor."

This follows the committee's decision to take no action against ministers such as Geoffrey Robinson, the Paymaster General, and Tony Banks, the sports minister, for breaching parliamentary rules. Neither was asked to make an apology to the House of Commons.

He warns: "Of course, public censure alone is serious for members. Nevertheless, I believe public opinion may feel that the committee is a bit 'soft'.

"In this context public opinion is important and the committee may, at some stage, want to give some indication of the 'normal' tariffs from which they could start their consideration in a particular case. A greater use of a required apology might be one option."

Sir Gordon suggests the tariff should run from: public censure, a required apology to the House of Commons, suspension and, in extreme cases, expulsion from Parliament. Future bribery cases should be handled by the courts.

He also proposes a "statute of limitations" on MPs' liability, perhaps of seven years, to avert the "risk of a 'tit for tat' war in which members search old records and debates for evidence of possible rule breaches".

Robert Sheldon, chairman of the Standards and Privileges Committee, said yesterday he endorsed Sir Gordon's views on the Hamilton case.

He indicated that the committee would be reviewing the role of lobbyists sponsoring all-party groups.

Sir Gordon will be replaced next February by Elizabeth Filkin, aged 58, chief adjudicator investigating complaints against the Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise.

The Klan Robe and Hood

hood is not used by Klansmen for the purpose of wrongdoing. In
s illustrated by the carrying of the Pastas in Spain; the hood wa
y; of anonymity in doing good works. This was the conception of
ed by General Nathan Bedford Forrest, and this is its true mean
s dedication to our God, our nation, our race, our Klan Brothers
t. The Klan robe and hood is used for ritual such as is done by Ma
aternities and even Mormons.



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e Ku Klux Klan Movement is not an "open membership" organi
ur qualifications 100% are allowed into our ranks.

allowed in our ranks who cannot declare an unqualified allegian
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allowed in this Movement who cannot pledge themselves to the

The Ku Klux Klan's website . . . one of those whose influence the HateFilter is designed to thwart, though free speech advocates say the device involves 'looking the other way'

US device to filter the Nazis off the Net

Julian Borger
in Washington

THE battle against racism in the US has taken to the World Wide Web with the development of a "hate filter" designed to prevent young Internet surfers being recruited by white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups using increasingly sophisticated child-oriented websites.

The HateFilter was put on the market this week by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) as a tool for parents to block children's access to a continually-updated list of websites run by racist groups.

"It is not only a block," Myrna Shinbaum of the ADL said yesterday. "It redirects the person to find information provided by the ADL on the group they were looking for. We hope parents will then be able to sit down with children and explain what these hate groups are about."

The ADL has produced the HateFilter in reaction to what it called the "exponential growth of hate sites" in recent years run by the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazi groups like the National Alliance, and white supremacist "religious" groups such as the World Church of the Creator.

"The haters have taken to the Internet in a way which no one could have believed," Ms Shinbaum said. "Now they use rock music and graphics which attract young people."

The Ku Klux Klan was the first racist group to see the potential of the Internet for

> 'Haters have taken to the Internet in a way no one could have believed'

reuniting its splintered factions, when the KKK leader, Don Black, established the "Storm Front" site in 1995.

The National Alliance, the most overtly Hitlerian group in the US, runs a site recycling the anti-semitic radio broadcasts of its leader, William Pearce, with links to skinhead sites such as Oi! Boys and Hammer Skin Nation.

The World Church of the Creator — which portrays blacks as an inferior, inherently criminal, race, and blames Jews for the slave trade — has produced a "kids" web page in simple English. It is illustrated with an idealised portrait of a white family, captioned: "The purpose of making this page is to help the younger members of the White Race understand our fight."

The ADL is selling its HateFilter at $30 (£20), and it will charge a further $30 per year for the list of blocked sites to be updated by its Internet monitoring unit. Ms Shinbaum said consumer interest had been "tremendous".

The HateFilter is a variation on existing filters designed to block access to pornographic sites, and can be used in conjunction with them by parents.

It has already been criticised by free speech advocates. Karen Schneider, a librarian and author of a critical book about Internet filters, said it amounted to "looking the other way" in the face of racism.

The ADL denies the filter amounts to censorship, but says it "recognises that the Internet is different from libraries and bookstores".

Review

Sparkling ballade of reading's goal

Judith Mackrell

Babel Index
The British Library

EVERYONE is fascinated by the secret lives of public buildings, by what might go on when the lights are switched off and the doors locked at night. So one of the irresistible pleasures of Stephan Koplowitz's recent site-specific dances is that they have engaged with the fantasy life of two of London's most famous institutions.

In 1996 he choreographed a work for the Natural History Museum, engendering extravagant thoughts of how the old Diplodocus and stuffed polar bears might be reacting to our after-hours intrusion. This year he has created Babel Index for Colin St John Wilson's British Library.

Having always been put off by the building's blockish exterior, I was enchanted to discover the monumental space of its interior and the pure, singing lines of its galleries and stairways.

Of course, Koplowitz's theme is books, and the history of books, so his performance begins in the courtyard with a dreamily futuristic vision of medieval monks poring over illuminated manuscripts. A line of robed and hooded dancers move in exquisite slow motion, holding books that are literally illuminated by fluorescent bulbs.

Once inside the 400 viewers are taken on a tour of the vast central hall, finding hidden pockets of dancers performing to Jonathan Stone's hallucinatory score (imagine Thomas Tallis orchestrated by Pink Floyd).

As we gaze down at a dozen bodies moving in light and scribbled shadows, it is as if we are seeing scraps of torn-up writing. Individuals curve their limbs into half-formed letters, then out of a chorus of tumbling, leaping dance whole sequences of letters suddenly emerge, beautifully composed but as puzzling as dead script.

Further on, groups of dancers are handing books to one another in serene, elegant procession, while others wrestle with them like squabbling academics. Then, for the closing section, we are guided back to the entrance to watch 54 dancers performing spectacular Busby Berkeley effects.

They wheel around the spiral staircase, signal mass semaphoric dances and toss their books into the air while a babel of images and words is projected on to the white walls.

It is a brilliantly orchestrated finale, and the fact that it surprisingly trails away into nothing can barely detract from the work's power. Koplowitz's riveting use of space is guided by the instincts of an architect and a showman, and the whole event is conducted with impressive efficiency.

Given that it depends on our national willingness to stay in line, it may be a uniquely British evening. But it is also the ultimate library experience, instilling an awed curiosity that makes St John Wilson's building feel, truly, like a modern cathedral of knowledge.

Broken spine glue hope

Scientists simulate nerve action after fusing severed animal cord

Stuart Millar

SCIENTISTS have successfully repaired severed spinal cords with a revolutionary technique that, for the first time, allows the broken ends to be fused together, restoring their ability to transmit electrical nerve impulses.

The breakthrough offers new hope to spinal injury victims such as Christopher Reeve, the actor who was paralysed in a riding accident.

A team of American researchers used polyethylene glycol (PEG), a plastic material used in medicine and cosmetics, to fuse together severed spinal cords from dead guinea pigs. Tests showed that all the repaired cords were able to conduct an electric current simulating nerve messages.

Richard Borgens, professor of developmental anatomy at Purdue University, Indiana, who led the research, said yesterday: "This technique may be a revolutionary way of dealing with injuries to the nervous system.

"It is too soon to know whether it could help patients with old injuries, but it is likely to be useful in treating recent injuries."

The researchers have now started testing the technique in live animals, but human patient trials are at least two years away.

In the guinea pig tests, PEG was applied for two minutes across a region of spinal cord which had been severed and pressed back together.

Within 15 minutes, enough nerve fibres were repaired to allow electrical impulses to pass through.

The technique was like repairing a broken rubber hose, Prof Borgens said. "If we add this special molecule PEG, the 'rubber' melts a tiny bit on each side and literally fuses the 'hose' together."

The technique could also repair crushed nerve cells. Most spinal cord injuries in both animals and humans involve crush damage rather than a clean cut.

Steven Bradshaw, of the Spinal Injuries Association, said: "People tend to clutch at straws when they hear about things like this. It is very interesting research but one has to look at it very carefully."

Labour gag on NEC

continued from page 1

tims of new rules to broaden the NEC to include councillors and other non-MPs.

One senior MP said: "If people come out of the NEC and say 'I said this', that's fine. What we don't want is people saying 'He said this and I said that'."

But a veteran former NEC figure protested: "Party officials would never have dared tell senior MPs and trade unionists what to do. The NEC would have discussed something like this and instructed officials. Now they seem to be instructing us."

In today's edition of Tribune, one of the Grassroots Alliance candidates, Pete Willsman — elected along with Tribune's editor, Mark Seddon, Liz Davies and Cathy Jamieson — signals that the foursome will not be cowed.

Mr Willsman, derided as an unreconstructed "headbanger" by his enemies in the party, says that "at present the NEC is shrouded in secrecy and people learn about its activities from leaks to the press". He offers "constructive dialogue" — and more openness towards the rank-and-file. That does not mean irresponsible leaking, one of the four stressed last night.

Ms McDonagh suggests that breaches of the proposed code should first be discussed within the NEC and could be liable to action under the party's wider disciplinary rules. "NEC members should try to avoid going head on head with another NEC member and, where possible, with another member of the Labour Party," she adds.

There is already a code to stop MPs "slagging each other off", officials point out. It is all part of the disciplined approach which Labour has increasingly adopted since Neil Kinnock first turned the party round after years of left-right feuding in the early 80s.

Ms McDonagh has been an up-and-coming party official with an abrasive organisational style since 1987. She succeeded Tom Sawyer in the top job in October to become, at 37, the youngest general secretary.

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Blairite vice-chancellor of Thames Valley quits after Quality Assurance Agency imposes an external supervisor to watch over recovery from 'a unique cocktail' of problems **John Carvel** reports



Mike Fitzgerald at a meeting with Tony Blair in 1996 but now the vice-chancellor has had to concede his university position PHOTOGRAPH: KIPPA MATTHEWS

University damned as incompetent

THE head of one of Britain's biggest universities resigned yesterday after the higher education quality watchdog challenged its competence to award degrees and warned that the standard of service offered to students was "under threat".

Mike Fitzgerald, vice-chancellor of Thames Valley University, said he was stepping down immediately in response to a damning verdict from the Quality Assurance Agency that the university could not be trusted to run its undergraduate programmes without strong external supervision.

Mr Fitzgerald was one of the few vice-chancellors to have the ear of Tony Blair and was a staunch advocate of the Government's policy of expanding further and higher education to widen opportunities for mature and part-time students, especially those from deprived backgrounds.

John Randall, the agency's chief executive, said there was nothing wrong with Thames Valley's mission to be a "student-driven institution" supporting "mass participation in higher education as a contribution to equality and social justice".

But he said the university was suffering from "a unique cocktail of poor management, ambitious academic structures and long-running industrial disputes".

The Higher Education Funding Council added a warning that Thames Valley was 30 per cent below its student recruitment target this year and would require monthly checks on its financial viability. It announced an external review under Sir William Taylor, former vice-chancellor of Hull, to supervise a recovery plan.

Thames Valley — with campuses in Ealing and Slough — became a university in 1992 when Conservative ministers decided to expand higher education by enhancing the status of the polytechnics. It originated from a merger of colleges including the Ealing School of Art, whose alumni included Pete Townshend of The Who, Ronnie Wood of the Rolling Stones and the late Freddie Mercury of Queen.

The university tried to attract unconventional students by laying on exotic-sounding courses, often with a strong vocational element that would provide career opportunities in music and media industries with a strong local presence. These included kite-flying, rock music and Indian cookery that provoked press criticism.

The strategy was effective in broadening Thames Valley's intake. Nearly two-thirds of its 28,000 students are part-timers, 59 per cent are over 25 and 48 per cent are non-white. Mr Fitzgerald replaced traditional teaching techniques with "resource-based learning", giving students greater freedom to pursue course modules that interested them.

He called in the QAA last year to investigate allegations that the university was deliberately "dumbing down" its standards to pass more students. The agency dismissed those charges, but discovered serious shortcomings of academic management.

It said: "The findings of the review team call into question the current competence of the university to exercise its powers to award degrees." External supervision was "essential to maintain public confidence in the university ... and to safeguard the interests of its current students".

Teaching staff felt they had become "hired hands" who had lost control of their courses and external examiners were "disgruntled and disbelieving". But there was "no evidence that individual students have been awarded degrees they should have failed".

Sheila Forbes, the university's chair of governors, said the report did not criticise standards of teaching or learning. It did not have a financial crisis and it would work to implement the agency's recommendations.

Brian Fender, chief executive of the Higher Education Funding Council, said: "Decisive action is needed to resolve the serious situation at TVU. The priority is to ensure that current and future students are guaranteed a good standard of education."

Baroness Blackstone, the higher education minister, said: "The taxpayer rightly expects value for money from the £6 billion a year spent on higher education. The QAA has shown these standards are in jeopardy at TVU ... We expect the governors to take firm and decisive action to address this failure."

Radical mission that ended in failure

MIKE Fitzgerald was one of the youngest and most popular vice-chancellors, who brought a breath a fresh air to gatherings of university principals, *writes John Carvel.*

It was not just his appearance that set him apart from the men in suits who made up most of the membership of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals. With a highlighted rock star haircut reminiscent of Rod Stewart, and a dangling earring, he made a statement that he would never be part of the port-sipping set.

But his CVCP colleagues respected his messianic zeal for a more open system of higher education. They made him one of their three vice-chairmen and regarded him as a leading voice of the new universities promoted from polytechnic status in 1992.

He got the top job at Thames Valley in 1991 at the age of 41, after spending most of his career at the Open University, where he became dean and director of social studies in the faculty of social sciences.

Mr Fitzgerald's passion for widening access to further and higher education influenced Tony Blair's commitment to 500,000 extra places by the next election. As a gesture of support, Mr Blair opened Thames Valley's flagship building in Slough.

But the academic staff did not respond well to the radical restructuring of their work that was designed to put students in the driving seat of managing their courses. Prolonged industrial unrest caused a breakdown in procedures for testing and marking students. By resigning yesterday, Mr Fitzgerald accepted that more conventional managers might better implement his mission.

Last night he said he was resigning "in the interests of the university and its continuing development. I wish every success to everyone associated with the university."

Schools cash-for-results row

Main unions predict disaster for Blunkett rewards plan

Rebecca Smithers
Education Correspondent

SCHOOLS could be funded partly by their results for the first time since the 1860s, under controversial new proposals that will enrage the main teacher unions.

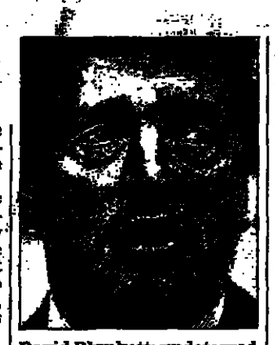
Primary and secondary schools that meet the many literacy, numeracy and exam targets set by the Government would qualify for extra cash.

Head teachers could channel this money into bonuses for individual teachers as part of a radical new salary structure.

The plan is one element in a wide-ranging package designed to provide a more rewarding career for teachers, to be set out in a green paper next month.

Despite resistance by the main unions to performance-related pay or payment by results, David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, is determined to press ahead with the plan, which he privately calls "something for something".

Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers, said: "This would be an utter disaster. Payment by results is a nonsense which has been tried before and failed. It has operated on a limited basis in the form of discretionary payments and shown to be bordering on corruption — 70 per cent of head teachers were eligible, yet only 1 per cent of classroom teachers." The National Union of Teachers reiterated its adamant opposition: "Teachers who are doing the same job, delivering the same service, should be paid the same," said the general secretary, Doug McAvoy.



David Blunkett: undeterred by fierce resistance

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers, however, welcomed the idea. Its general secretary, Peter Smith, said: "What's wrong with the country investing in success? Provided we ensure that less successful schools are getting the money they need too."

Mr Blunkett is expected to set out some of the themes and principles underlying the green paper at a Fabian Society conference, sponsored by the Guardian, next Tuesday.

To counter union fears that performance schemes will widen the gulf between "good" and "failing" schools, the document will include measures to reward good teachers in poor schools.

Peers put Euro-voting bill at risk

Ewen MacAskill, Chief Political Correspondent

THE Government was locked into constitutional ping-pong with the Lords after the peers inflicted a third defeat last night on its European voting bill.

The bill is in danger of being lost, which would throw into chaos plans to fight the European election in June under proportional representation rather than first-past-the-post.

Tony Blair, refusing to concede defeat, is to send the bill back to the Lords for another go. But time is running out, with the present parliamentary sesssion scheduled to end next Friday, when the bill would automatically fall.

The Lords, which has an in-built Conservative majority, voted by 237 to 194 to back a Tory amendment, forcing the bill back to the Commons, which has already twice reversed Lords defeats on the issue.

Labour regards the Lords tactics as reckless and making it less amenable to compromise when it embarks on reform of the Lords over the coming year.

But the Conservatives see the defeat, which was welcomed by William Hague, as a useful demonstration that the Government is not invincible.

If the bill is lost, the Government will bring it back in the Queen's Speech on November 24. The downside is it would eat into precious legislative time in the new session and provide peers with opportunities to delay the Lords reform bill.

A senior Conservative said yesterday peers would be given freedom to engage in wrecking and delaying tactics. A Labour spokesman said the Government would table new amendments in the Commons, which would be passed, and then return the bill to the Lords.

Mr Hague said: "If the Government fails, don't blame the House of Lords." He described the bill, which would introduce the closed list system that gives parties huge control over the choice of Euro-MPs, as undemocratic.

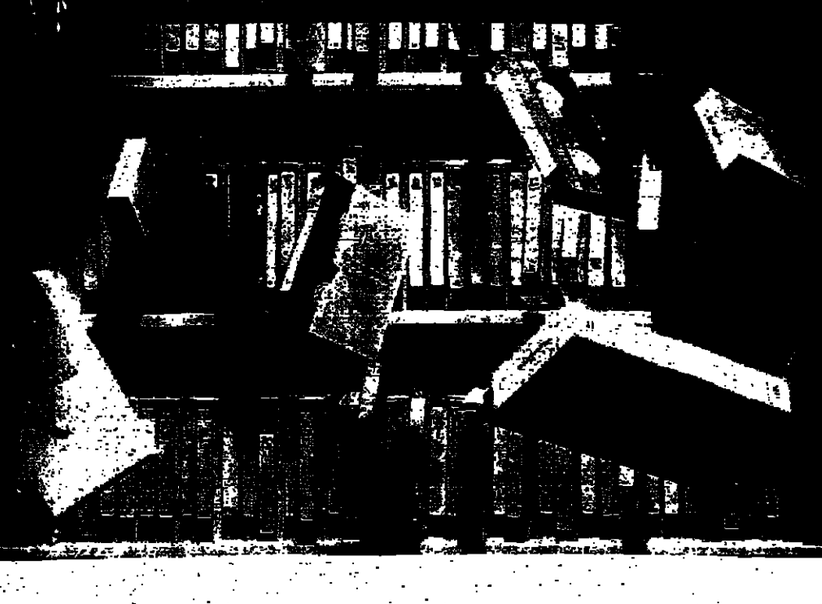
> 'If they take the bloody-minded course they seem intent on, we will resist their vandalism with every legitimate means'

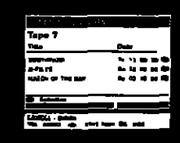
His constitutional affairs spokesman, Liam Fox, said Labour still had time to be reasonable on constitutional reform, in particular Lords reform.

"But if they take the high-handed and bloody-minded course they seem intent on, we will resist their reckless vandalism with every legitimate means available to us," he said.

The Liberal Democrat home affairs spokesman, Alan Beith, joined Labour in condemning the Lords' action. "The Tories will stop at nothing to try to prevent British voters from getting fair representation in Europe."

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Burglar trapped in cathedral crypt

Jamie Wilson

A BURGLAR who left a trail of havoc in a cathedral after he found himself locked inside the crypt was jailed for four years yesterday.

Christopher Simms smashed leaded windows and doors in a hopeless bid to escape from the depths of Westminster Cathedral.

He was spotted by a passing pedestrian and by the time police found him trapped inside the cathedral's dimly lit interior he was in such a "distressed state" that he could not wait to confess, Southwark crown court was told.

"Yeah, I did it," Simms, aged 21, told the officers who arrested him. "I was burgling the place. I was locked in and I was trying to get out."

He showed police two plastic carrier bags of equipment from the music room that he had hoped to steal.

Annabel Darlow, prosecuting, said Simms, from central London, tried to burgle the cathedral after a drinking session. He stole a set of keys marked "organ scholar" from an unlocked outer office before helping himself to £850 worth of property, including a piccolo, headphones and items of audio equipment. He ransacked the sacristy, the rest room, savings room, nave and other areas, hurling donation boxes to the floor and scattering documents.

When he found he was trapped in the crypt he smashed numerous windows and damaged doors as well as the nave floor in his bid to escape. Miss Darlow said the repair bill totalled £3,118.

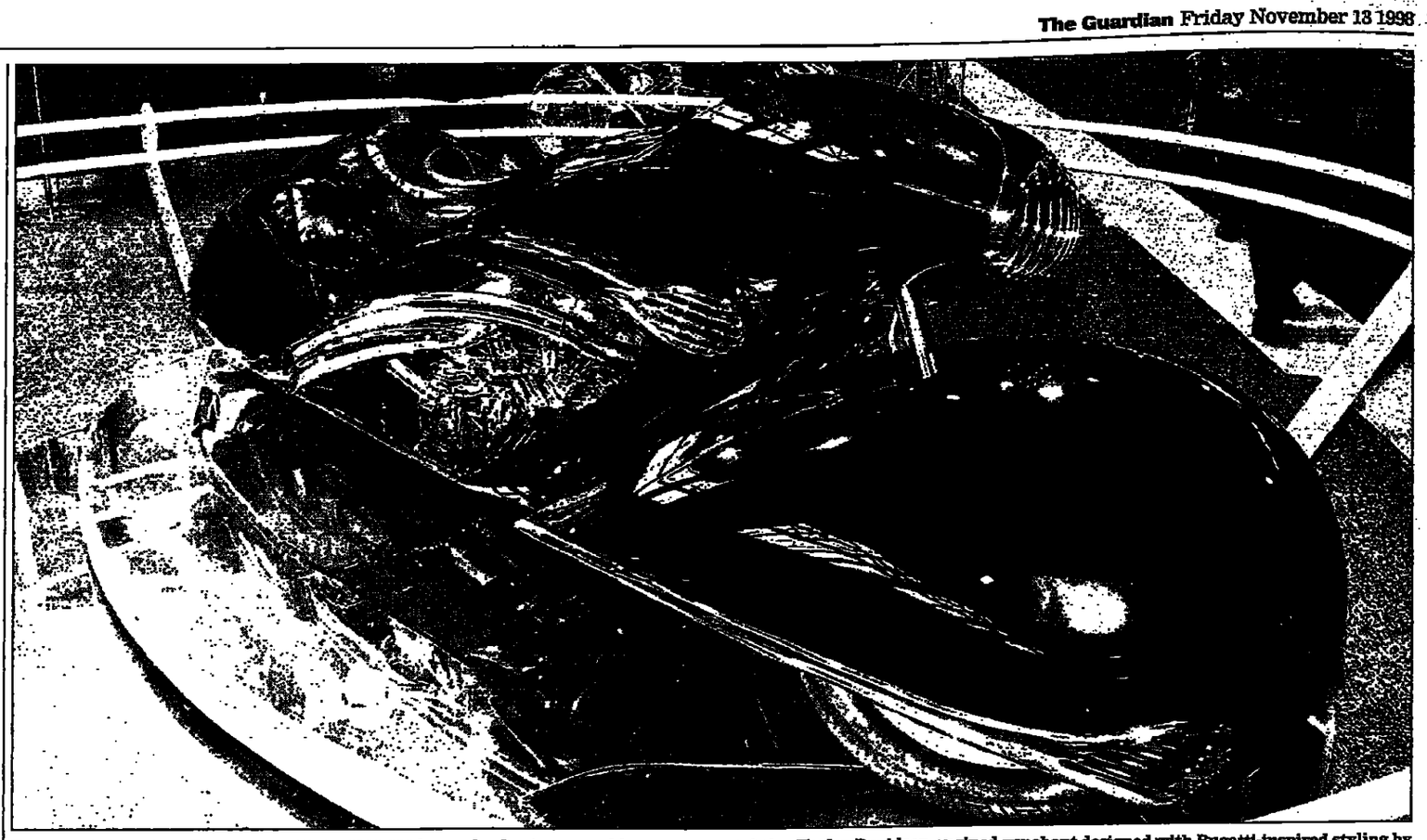
She said the alarm was raised when Father Norman Brown was warned by a priest that a pedestrian had seen Simms trying to force his way out of the crypt. Police were called and within minutes found the thief.

Passing sentence, Judge Jeffrey Rucker told him: "It is a very serious offence to desecrate and burgle a religious place.

"You got into the building by stealing keys and then once you were in there you did a good deal of damage ... the irony is that having got in you couldn't get out and you were trapped and caught."

Referring to Simms's numerous previous convictions for burglary, dishonesty and motoring offences over the past five years, the judge added: "You have had your chances in the past and you have not taken them."

Simms was jailed for four years after pleading guilty to burglary and criminal damage. He was also given a four month concurrent jail term for stealing clothes from stores in Maidstone, Kent, and an additional month's imprisonment — also concurrent — because he had been on bail for shoplifting when he broke into the cathedral.



Two-wheeled treat ... For anyone with its £100,000 insured value to spare, this curvaceous, 1,340cc Harley Davidson-engined runabout designed with Bugatti-inspired styling by California-based Arlen Ness might be just the thing to snap up from its stand at this year's Motor Cycle Show at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID JONES

Birth pain linked to violent suicide among men

Sarah Boseley
Health Correspondent

MEN who suffered pain when they were born because of complications in delivery are more likely to end their lives in violent suicide, says a controversial study by Swedish scientists in this week's British Medical Journal.

The suicide rate among young men has doubled in recent years, and it is men who are most likely to use violent means to kill themselves, whether by hanging, shooting, or jumping off a building. In England and Wales, there are over 2,000 violent suicides a year.

Bertil Jacobson and Marc Bygdeman from the Karolinska Institute in Sweden believe some of these deaths could be averted by greater care to reduce infant suffering during birth.

Their study compared 242 adults who committed suicide by violent means with 403 siblings who did not. All the babies were born between 1945 and 1980, while those who killed themselves died between 1978 and 1995.

The professors found that men who had been through a difficult birth, involving more than one trauma, such as a forceps delivery, emergency caesarian section, resuscitation or other intervention, were nearly five times as likely to kill themselves by violent means than were their siblings. The figures were much lower for women.

But the study also found that the suicide risk was greatly reduced for men and women whose mothers were given painkillers that would have an effect on the baby during labour. "Minimising pain and discomfort to the infant during birth seems to be of importance in reducing the risk of committing suicide by violent means as an adult," they say.

For decades now, they point out, millions of mothers in the developed world have been subjected to medical interventions intended to ensure the child is born alive. At the same time, the incidence of adolescent suicide has gone up. "We believe that obstetric procedures should be chosen to minimise pain and discomfort to the infant if an increased risk of suicide by violent means is to be avoided."

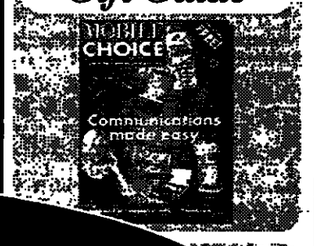
A different explanation of their findings, they acknowledge, could be that painful deliveries make women more ambivalent towards their children and are therefore "less motivated to provide good child care". For that reason also, more pain relief in labour might be a good idea, they say.

In a separate commentary, Louis Appleby, professor of psychiatry at Manchester university, says: "Any link between obstetric care and violent suicide is more likley to occur through mental illness".

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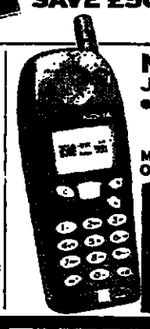
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Third time unlucky as Friday the 13th returns

Amelia Gentleman

TODAY'S date is more likely to inspire weary resignation than a sense of trepidation in the hearts of even Britain's most superstitious citizens.

This is the third Friday the 13th this year. Not since 1987 have we had a triple dose of the unluckiest date in the calendar, and it will be 2009 before so much bad luck is scheduled again. Given, that is, that bad luck is thought to strike in threes, confirmed triskaidekaphobics (people with a horror of the number 13) may still be crossing their fingers that things turn out third time lucky today.

Friday and the number 13 have separate bad luck qualities. Adam and Eve are supposed to have eaten the forbidden fruit on a Friday and died on a Friday. There were 13 at table for the Last Supper and Christ is believed to have been crucified on a Friday.

Studies suggest 41 per cent of people believe the number 13 has special significance, especially when connected with Friday; 4 per cent dread the date.

Fervent believers in the phenomenon of Friday the 13 delight in any incident that supports their fears. They cite retired bus driver Bob Renphey, who has vowed to spend every Friday 13 in bed after in the past by crashing five cars, falling into a river, walking through a glass door and being made redundant. They claim that even Prince Charles has been affected by the date — in 1979 he walked into scaffolding at Exeter Cathedral.

The British Medical Journal once reported that the casualty rate on the M25 was unusually high on five Friday the 13ths out of six.

But the AA last night dismissed the hysteria. A spokeswoman said: "Friday is the worst day for congestion anyway, and we routinely deal with about 13,000 breakdowns. A lot of people will probably blame their breakdown on the date. They shouldn't."

Pinochet ruling by Lords 'too close to call'

Jamie Wilson

THE House of Lords yesterday reserved judgment on whether General Augusto Pinochet is immune from prosecution on charges of genocide, terrorism and torture.

A panel of five senior Law Lords said they would deliver their opinion "in due course" in the appeal by the Crown Prosecution Service, on behalf of Spanish authorities, against a High Court ruling on October 28 that the former Chilean dictator's arrest at a London clinic on October 16 was unlawful.

The three High Court judges led by the Lord Chief Justice Lord Bingham, ruled that as a former head of state the 82-year-old general enjoyed sovereign immunity and was immune from arrest.

Yesterday, the Law Lords finished listening to arguments on the sixth day of what Lord Slynn, the panel's chairman, described as "this most important and very difficult case".

Although it is not uncommon for Law Lords to take three months to reach a decision, they are expected to rule on this case within two weeks.

Owen Davis, a barrister specialising in human rights cases, said he was "confident" the Law Lords would uphold the appeal. "The highly complicated argument enabled the issues to crystalise and the CPS and interveners have presented a comprehensive and cohesive rationale for overturning the decision of the High Court," he said.

However, many experts suggest the decision is too close to call. At least two of the Law Lords, the campaigning South African judges lords Hoffman and Steyn, appeared to be coming down in favour of overturning the High Court decision. The Lords can rule with a majority decision, although in a case this sensitive they are likely to try to reach a unanimous decision.

Earlier the Law Lords heard that the general's immunity from arrest even covered his role in Operation Condor, the systematic attempt to suppress opposition throughout South America's southern cone using assassination and torture.

Clive Nicholls QC, for Pinochet, said the "co-ordination at an international level" involved in Condor required official involvement and so qualified for state immunity.

However, in his closing remarks yesterday, Christopher Greenwood, for the CPS, told the court that some of the acts alleged against Pinochet could not be considered legitimate functions of a head of state. He said there was no question that the grave crimes alleged against him were clearly violations of international law, and had been widely known to be such during his rule.

"Torture, hostage-taking and crimes against humanity are conduct which international law has forbidden unequivocally throughout the period we are looking at," said Mr Greenwood.

Pinochet is now on bail at the private Grovelands Priory psychiatric hospital in Southgate, north London, following his arrest on October 16.

The extradition request covering the period of Pinochet's rule from 1973-90, was forwarded on Wednesday to Home Secretary Jack Straw after being approved by the Spanish cabinet.

Extra cash for teaching ethnic minority pupils

Rebecca Smithers

THE Government yesterday announced extra cash for teaching of ethnic minority pupils, with special help targeted at refugee and other children for whom English is not their first language.

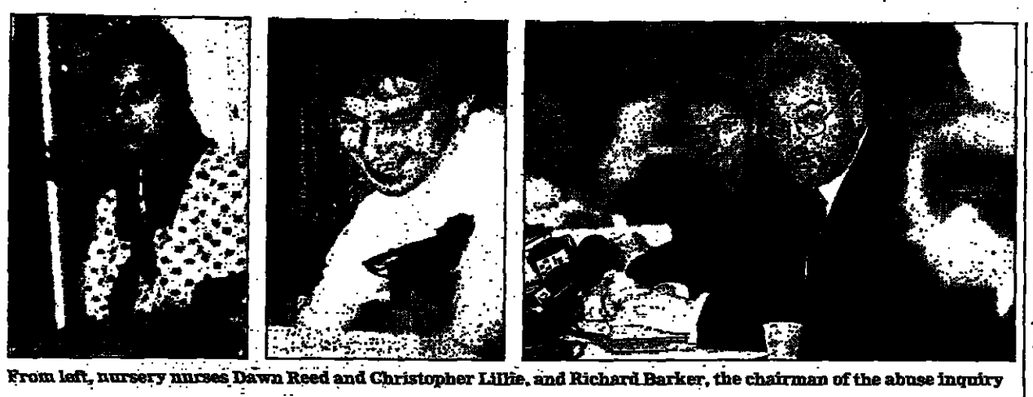
In a fresh drive to boost educational standards in this sector, funding will be increased by 15 per cent to £430 million over the next three years, and schools will have a bigger say in how the money is used, allowing them to recruit specialist help such as teaching and classroom assistants.

Ministers want to break the so-called "cycle of disadvantage" among ethnic minorities, whereby poor education leads to high levels of long term unemployment.

Announcing the initiative in a speech to Asian and Afro-Caribbean employers in London, David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, said: "Children from ethnic minorities are an important and vibrant part of today's Britain."

NEWCASTLE ABUSE INQUIRY: Children as young as two were molested over a three-year period by nurses and unknown 'others'

Nursery staff ran paedophile ring



From left, nursery nurses Dawn Reed and Christopher Lillie, and Richard Barker, the chairman of the abuse inquiry

Peter Hetherington

CHANCE remarks from a toddler six years ago prompted an inquiry into systematic child abuse at a Newcastle children's nursery which led to 434 complaints from parents and probably brought police close to a paedophile ring, it emerged last night.

A year later a two-year-old set further alarm bells ringing when he told his mother that nursery nurse Dawn Reed was hurting him, while her colleague Christopher Lillie "keeps hurting my bum", according to the 400-page inquiry report commissioned by Newcastle City Council. The woman complained to the police and one of the largest child abuse investigations this decade soon began.

Described by his mother as normally "full of fun, boisterous, quick at learning" — and by a consultant paediatrician as a "bright, delightful and forthcoming little boy" — the report notes that the two-year-old became fearful and distressed, while blood was noticed on his nappy.

Initially the mother — who, like all the families involved, cannot be identified for legal reasons — was dismissed by her GP as over-anxious. But gradually the full horror of abuse at the Shieldfield day nursery, run by the city's social services department, was uncovered — although the four-strong inquiry team, including child protection specialists and a clinical psychologist, say that early in 1993 a mother noticed acute distress in her child who later indicated he had been sexually assaulted by a member of staff at the nursery.

The inquiry was set up by the city council after a case against Lillie and Reed, accused of child sex abuse, collapsed at Newcastle crown court in 1994 because a judge ruled that video evidence from one child was inadmissible.

The leader of the review team, Richard Barker, head of a child and family services division at the University of Northumbria, noted that the scale and scope of the inquiry "extended beyond anything imagined".

Crucially, the team found that as well as Lillie and Reed, others outside the nursery were involved in abusing children "probably also for the production of pornographic materials."

The report adds: "These people have not been found."

Asked by the Guardian whether this implied the existence of a paedophile ring, Mr Barker, after consultation with the team's solicitor sitting alongside, said people would have to draw their own conclusions.

Over a three-year period, more than 40 parents were seen and 112 witnesses interviewed, leading the team to the conclusion that the city council showed "poor practice, bad management and poor co-ordination," although they acknowledge that significant improvements have since been made.

The assaults were said to have taken place in toilets, in a cupboard, and in a play house at the nursery. One boy said Lillie had held his penis and "rubbed it until hurt". A girl said that when Dawn Reed was angry with her at lunchtime, she had cutlery put into "her bum and Fairy (liquid)" Another child said a "hammer with water coming out of it was put into her 'jenny'", while a fourth said that "Dawn did most of the scary stuff."

According to the report, another child said: "They gave you to strangers." Sometimes these people — unnamed and presumably unknown — were referred to as "other mummies and daddies", and children described cameras, including video equipment, being used.

Parents talked of a wider conspiracy. According to the report, they believed "that officers, elected members of the council, and others had either conspired to organise the abuse of their children or had then organised to cover up the abuse to protect individuals and the authority."

From evidence they have seen, the inquiry team say there is no doubt that Lillie and Reed had conspired to abuse children "and it is also clear that other people outside the nursery were involved."

Conspiracy fears appeared to be based on the fact that Lillie had been in the care of Newcastle social services as a young person, was probably himself sexually abused, and had been recruited by officers who knew his background and "vulnerabilities".

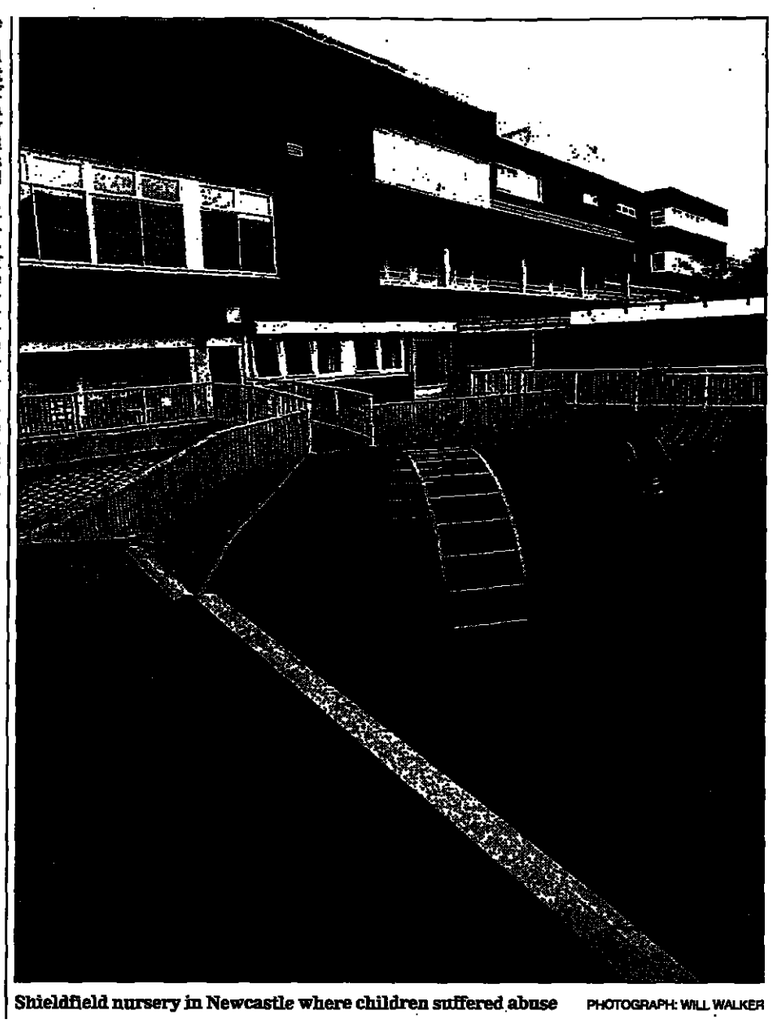
Furthermore, Lillie and Reed were represented at disciplinary and criminal proceedings by the law firms of two councillors, while one councillor had been the subject of a child protection investigation "following allegations from a child at the nursery" — allegations subsequently not corroborated after interviews by police.

But the report notes that officers had to interview more speedily than planned "because of strong, and realistic fears of a media leak regarding the investigation." In addition, the report says a number of key documents were missing.

However, the team said: "We are satisfied there was no organised conspiracy by Newcastle City Council officers and elected members to procure children at Shieldfield nursery for abuse, or to cover up what had happened at the nursery and elsewhere.

"We do think that there are individuals — Christopher Lillie and Dawn Reed — who did *probably* (their italics) conspire with others unknown, but we conclude that *those others* were not officers or elected members of the council."

The report says Lillie and Reed, still believed to be living in the North-east, took children out of the nursery — "far in excess of other staff" — for no apparent educational or social reason, and this was never queried by senior managers.



Shieldfield nursery in Newcastle where children suffered abuse PHOTOGRAPH: WILL WALKER

'It is a life sentence. And we feel very guilty. Why did we not pick it up? I mean, we're her parents. We took her there'

THEY were more hurt than angry, still traumatised almost six years after their daughter, eight tomorrow, was badly abused, *writes Peter Hetherington.* "I am surprised how badly it has affected me," volunteers Jenny.

"We've had so many questions unanswered and I don't think I'll ever be the same person again. My daughter is 'fine' now. She went through therapy for 18 months. But we have our ups and downs. We went to counselling together, but it's much more difficult for the dad to cope with. The support they provided was all for the mothers."

Shaking, her husband, Peter, whispered: "I am still coming to terms with it. Six years and I haven't got over it."

"It's a life sentence, isn't it?" interjects Jenny. "We don't know how our children will react when they go into puberty and have their first sexual relationship. And we feel very, very guilty."

Guilty? Jenny wipes away the tears. "Yes, guilty. Why did we not pick it up? I mean, we're her parents. We took her there. If it wasn't for that little boy who said something, we might never have known. It's hard to cope."

The couple had been recommended the nursery by university colleagues. After six months, when their daughter turned two, she was moved to another room. "Before that she'd been fine — doing really well, and out of nappies. And then..."

At first Jenny was not unduly alarmed. "You know, terrible twos, your first child. But things got worse. She became very 'clingy'. I was then pregnant with my second daughter, but then I realised."

She accepted that the city council had, belatedly, put money into helping the families of the 64 children affected. "People were moved from small houses to three-bedroomed detached. They got baby-sitting and other things. And most of the children have gone through the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board."

Yesterday, at a press conference in the office of the solicitor acting for 27 of the families, other parents said more senior officials should be brought to book. Based on the report, two former members of the nursery staff were yesterday suspended.

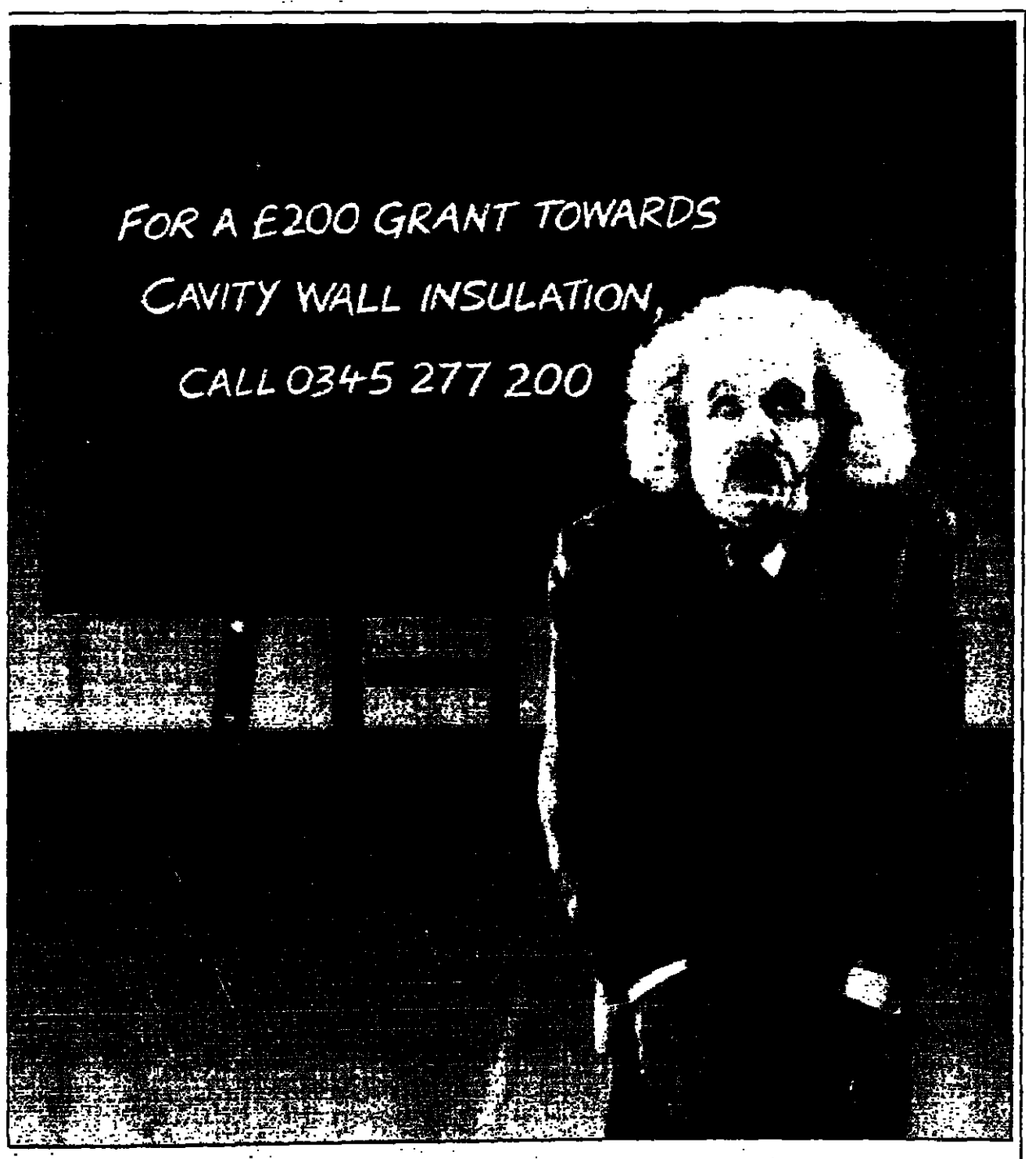
But that is little comfort for parents whose children have suffered. "They were just babies," said a parent. "They have lost their early years. It was so terrible what happened to them. Most days my child is fine, but sometimes he's not. I don't think he will ever forget."

A father added: "There is a great responsibility lying with those at the top of the organisation who allowed this to happen."

The aunt of the boy, now 7, who first alerted the authorities to the widespread abuse at Shieldfield, said her whole family had been affected by the trauma, and would never recover. "You cannot imagine the hurt this has caused."

She said her nephew "told" because he was a bright, intelligent child, well ahead of his years. "They picked on the wrong boy because they didn't realise how independent he was. He saved a lot of other children. But we feel that they have only got to a few small peas in a big pod, and it is still going on. There is a big, big ring out there, and it's not just two people."

Names have been changed.



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Nightly antics spell ruin for churches

Flying visitors found to be hellish threat to heritage

Maev Kennedy
Heritage Correspondent

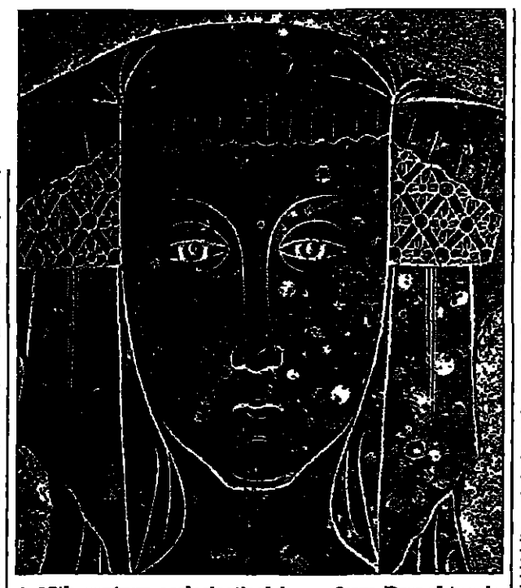
AT LEAST 60 per cent of England's 8,000 medieval parish churches have been broken into, with irreparable damage done to wall paintings, stone monuments, carved oak and brasses.

However, the first attempt at a national study of the problem has concluded that it is virtually impossible to prevent the damage — or in most cases to repair it.

The culprits, which weigh only ounces and can slip through tiny gaps, are bats. Although they are causing great damage, the churches provide vital sanctuary for a protected animal, including several species on the verge of extinction.

Their tiny fatty droppings stick where they fall, on wall paintings and monuments, but any attempt to brush them off causes further damage. Far worse is the havoc caused by their drops of urine, which the research found is 70 per cent urea, a strong acid. This etches brass and bronze, leaves irremovable stains on stone, and eats through wood.

The head of the English Heritage Archaeological Monument, Mike Corfield, said the problem was complex, and many of the attempted solutions made matters worse.



A 15th century ecclesiastical brass from Broughton in Oxfordshire, irreparably 'etched' with acidic bats' urine

"My gut feeling is there are probably about 50 absolutely desperate cases, where terrible damage is being done, and about 1,000 more where there will probably have to be some intervention. Many of the measures tried in the past are either unsightly, like wrapping things up in plastic sheeting, or disastrous, like various protective coatings. In fact we are spending a lot of our energies reversing earlier measures."

The joint study by English Heritage and English Nature also involved the Bat Conservation Trust, micro-transmitters to track the winged offenders and local volunteers who spent thousands of hours monitoring churches.

At St John the Baptist in Clayton, West Sussex, the churchwarden's first job in the morning is to sweep out drifts of droppings. The treasures of the tiny Grade I listed church, which draws visitors from all over the world, are its early 12th century wall paintings — which are speckled with droppings.

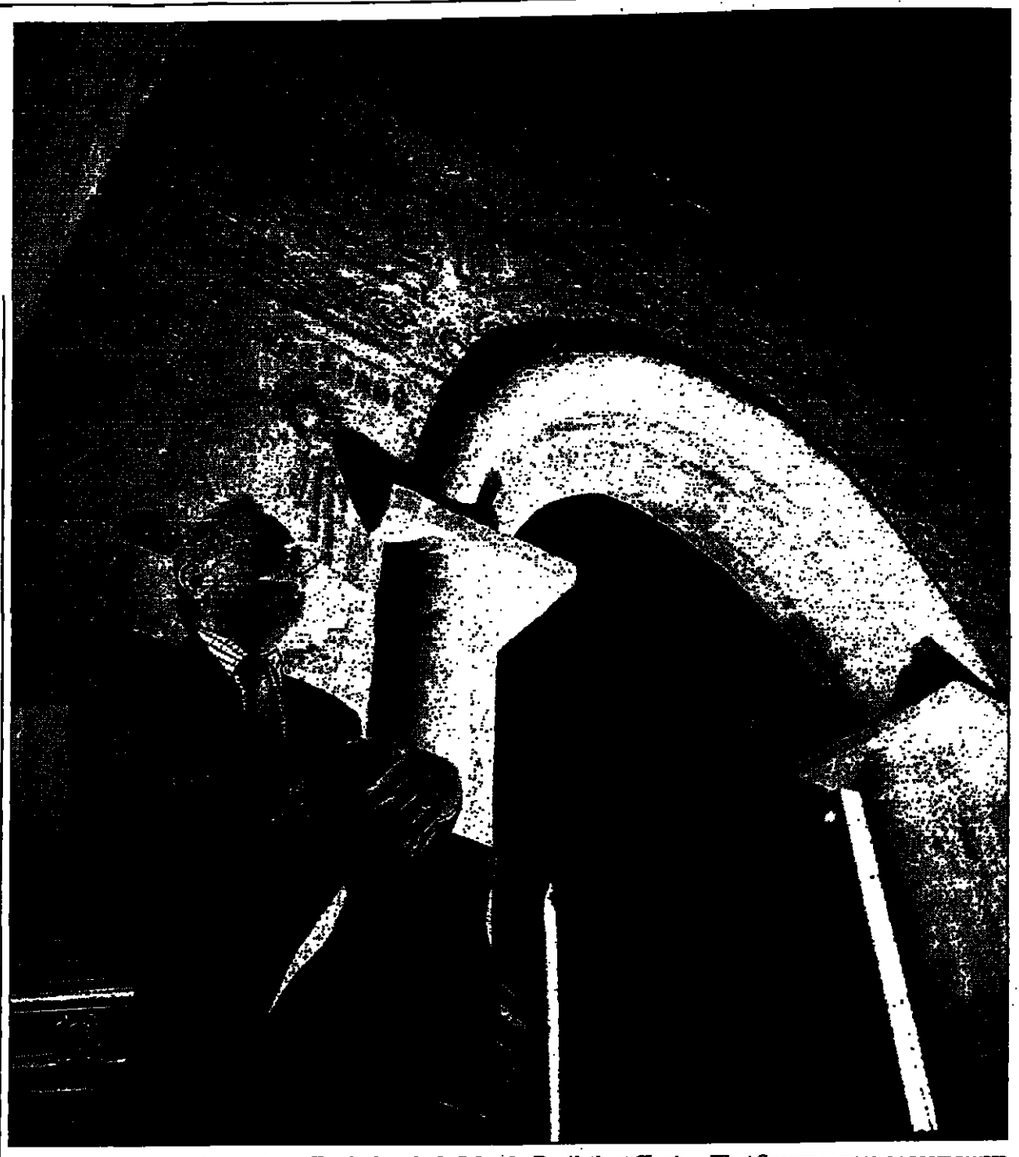
The first attempt to monitor the bats baffled everyone, by showing that only two were actually resident. However, follow-up work found the church to be a meeting place for the flying mammals. At night they streamed in under the door and the roof slates, through the eaves and, as traditionally, the belfry. Unfortunately, though, they all appeared to urinate both as they entered and left.

The study also found almost all the traditional measures to stop them were hopeless, whether imitation owls, ultrasound, plastic strips, wires or bright lights — in fact the latter attracted insects and even more bats.

The church, with a congregation of 30-40 from a small Domesday village, recently raised £12,000 to restore the paintings, but will soon have to do it all over again.

"We have to ask ourselves what the churches are for? Have we just built ourselves a lot of medieval bat roosts," churchwarden James Puntan said. "They are places of worship first and foremost. We don't want to destroy the bats, we just want to keep them out."

"It is extraordinary how little we know about them, given that they have been living among us for so long," Mr Corfield said. "To come up with solutions, we are going to have to learn a lot more about the behaviour of bats."



An expert surveys bat damage to wall paintings in St John the Baptist's at Clayton, West Sussex PHOTOGRAPH: ROGER BAMBER

Livestock drugs face Euro ban

Stephen Bates in Brussels

THE European Commission yesterday proposed a ban on the main antibiotics used in animal feed because of fears that they may increase human resistance to medicines.

Officials in Brussels are proposing prohibitions on four of the eight antibiotics used in feed and are placing the other four under immediate scientific review in a move which would affect a trade valued at hundreds of millions of dollars a year to multi-national pharmaceutical companies.

The commission believes that traces of the antibiotic passed on through particularly pork and poultry meat could be reducing the effectiveness of medicines using the same chemicals for humans because resistance is being built up, although the evidence of a link has not yet been scientifically proven.

The proposal, put forward by Franz Fischler, the agriculture commissioner, would have to be agreed by the member states.

It is likely to subject Brussels to renewed lobbying from the chemicals industry, which has already had runins with the EU over genetically modified crops, and from farmers.

A similar ban, implemented in the late 80s against hormones, has been widely flouted by farmers and led to confrontation with the US and other countries where growth promoters are legal.

Between two-thirds and four-fifths of all cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry are believed to be fed antibiotics at some stage of their rearing.

Last night the National Farmers Union said an immediate ban would cause considerable problems.

The chemicals are already banned in Sweden and other parts of Scandinavia and, if agriculture ministers agree next month, could be banned throughout the union from the start of next year.

The four antibiotics proposed for the ban are Spiramycin, Bacitracin Zinc, Tylosin phosphate and Virginiamycin, manufactured by some of the biggest pharmaceuticals companies in the world including Pfizer and Eli Lilley. They bring in more than £500 million a year for the pharmaceutical industry. They are used in small traces to promote rapid growth and disease resistance.

Sales of the drugs are estimated at £500 million annually. The eight antibiotics used in animal feed account for about 15 per cent of the total sold each year.

A spokeswoman for the National Farmers Union said last night: "Antibiotics in this country have brought enormous benefits for animal health and welfare over many decades and we have not seen any scientific evidence of the transfer of resistance to humans."

Penniless 'old hero' weds rich Romanian

Will Woodward

ONE half of the new married couple is penniless. The other is worth a fortune. One is 25, the other 50. One is Romanian, the other British.

Rod Jones, British, is 50, and lives off benefit. Gabriella Cojocaru, Romanian, 25, is the daughter of a wealthy property dealer. They married at Middlesbrough register office.

"She is one of the most beautiful women you could ever meet and I am one of the ugliest men you have ever seen in your life," Mr Jones said cheerfully yesterday. He admits there have been raised eyebrows locally but insists this romance is for real.

"From my point of view he's not ugly," says Gabriella. "It's about love."

They met earlier this year through Mr Jones's work delivering medical supplies to children's orphanages in Romania. Gabriella, who is training to be a doctor, worked at one of the orphanages in Iasi as a medical officer.

Gabriella, who arrived on Teesside a month ago, is now ensconsed in her husband's one-bedroom flat overlooking the North Sea in Redcar — a far cry from her family's 20-room mansion in Bivolari. She's already bought her husband a four-wheel drive vehicle as a wedding present.

"Before we had a professional relationship — and it just happened," she said.

"Children in Romania have been made happier because of Rod and the work he does. Before these children had nothing and Rod is a hero. There is a big difference in our ages and our backgrounds are different, but that doesn't matter."

But the Department of Social Security is apt to pull up Mr Jones, who has angina, arthritis and asthma, and query his benefits, particularly over trips to Romania for the charity he founded, Convoy Aid.

Gabriella wants to go back to Romania to finish her studies. Her husband plans to go with her, but wants to be able to continue ferrying supplies from Britain. But the Home Office has said Gabriella must return to Romania and thenapply for permission to return to the UK.

"I am very disappointed. I don't want to stay here. I don't want a British passport. I just want to be free to travel with my husband to my husband's country," she said.

Mr Jones said: "I am on benefit and they said she wouldn't get another visa unless I can guarantee I can support her. It's her father that gives the money to her."

And her father, Nicolaie, does not approve of the marriage. "He's a year younger than me and he wasn't too pleased." But her mother, Elizabeta, accepted it. "She said life is short and you have to live it like you want," Gabriella said.

Doctor accused of two more patient deaths

David Ward

A FAMILY doctor charged with killing four patients was remanded in custody yesterday after being accused of the murder of two more women.

Wearing a blue denim shirt, Harold Shipman, aged 52, from Hyde, Greater Manchester, appeared in the dock at Ashton-under-Lyne magistrates' court for just two minutes.

He was charged with killing Ivy Lomas, aged 63, who died on May 27 1997, and Marie Quinn, aged 67, who died on November 24 1997. He will return to the court on December 7, to appear on earlier charges of murdering Winifred Mellor and Joan Melia, both aged 73, and Bianka Pomfret, aged 49.

Dr Shipman's solicitor, Anne Ball, made no application for his bail and he was remanded in custody.

On January 7, Dr Shipman will be sent for trial at Manchester crown court on the charges of murdering Mrs Lomas and Mrs Quinn. Earlier this week, he was committed for trial accused of the murder of 81-year-old Kathleen Grundy and of forging and using her will and a letter.

As he left the court, Shipman looked across at his wife, Primrose, who was sitting in the public gallery.

Early yesterday morning, detectives exhumed the remains of Jean Lilley, the third body to be exhumed this week and the ninth since inquiries began in the summer into the deaths of Dr Shipman's patients.

Mrs Lilley died aged 58 at her home in Hyde on April 25 last year. Signing her death certificate, Dr Shipman said she had died of heart failure, heart disease and hypertension.

A former neighbour described her as "a lovely woman and nice neighbour".

The other two bodies removed from Hyde cemetery this week were those of Irene Turner, aged 67, and Alice Kitchen, aged 70.

Dr Shipman, aged 52, signed the death certificates of Mrs Lomas and Mrs Quinn. He gave the cause of death of Mrs Lomas, who died in his surgery, as coronary thrombosis, ischaemic heart disease, chronic obstructive airway disease and smoking.

The widow of an engineer, Mrs Lomas lived in a terraced house in Hyde, for more than 30 years and is survived by a son and daughter.

Dr Shipman certified that Mrs Quinn died of a cerebrovascular accident, arteriosclerosis, hypertension and scleroderma. Mrs Quinn had been a food process worker but had become a tireless charity worker and supporter of St Paul's Roman Catholic church.

Father Denis Maher, her parish priest, praised her unbounded energy. "Her influence extended far and wide."

Small becomes beautiful in lottery aid stakes

Ewen MacAskill, Chief Political Correspondent

THE Government is to move to simplify National Lottery funding by introducing a £40 million fast-track scheme to distribute money to individuals for small projects, especially in deprived areas.

Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, is concerned that the middle class has secured a dominance over lottery funding, because people from inner city areas are more easily rebuffed when confronted with piles of paperwork and protracted discussions.

"If you want a mini-bus for a local youth group, all you will have to do is ask," a government source said.

Under the £40 million scheme the red tape will be binned and applicants will receive a speedy yes or no after submitting a single, simple application.

Under the Awards for All initiative, four regional centres will each have a pot of £10 million to disperse each year.

At present money for "good causes" is not available for individuals except through third parties. An individual who wanted to do voluntary work with the elderly would have to apply for the funding from Help the Aged, which would negotiate on their behalf to obtain the National Lottery money.

The lottery has raised almost £6 billion for various causes.

Go to Roeselare today and you will find no mention of Marthe McKenna in the town's exhibition about the Great War.
Spy in the cold

Friday Review page iv

Snatched hair tested for match with child

Sarah Hall and Helena Smith in Athens

HOPES of finding Ben Needham, the toddler who went missing on the Greek island of Kos seven years ago, intensified today as forensic scientists prepared to carry out DNA tests on a blond hair which a visitor believes might belong to the boy.

The forensic service in Wetherby, West Yorkshire, will examine a single strand plucked by a holidaymaker from the head of a boy found playing on a beach on Rhodes — 50 miles from where Ben went missing.

Its DNA will be compared with a hair from the missing boy's 44-year-old maternal grandmother, Christine Needham. Results may not be available for some weeks.

Ben was 21 months old when he vanished in July 1991 from outside a farmhouse his grandparents were renovating.

Since then, there have been more than 200 false sightings of blond, blue-eyed children, with theories abounding that Ben had been abducted, stolen by gypsies, or sold.

"But this time it's different," said his grandfather, Eddie Needham, aged 49, now living in Sheffield. "This time we've got something physical which will prove one way or another whether it's Ben."

Ben's mother Kerry, aged 26, also from Sheffield, added: "We are trying to keep levelheaded in case it turns out to be disappointing because, obviously, it's then devastating."

But she said John Cookson — the tourist who pulled the hair as he ruffled the boy's head, and provided police with video footage of him — was sure the boy was Ben.

"The Cooksons first saw him about two years ago ... and seem very convinced. There are a lot of suspicious circumstances, the family he is with are very dark skinned, while he is white, his hair is white. He just does not fit in."

Mr Cookson gave the Needhams the hair when he returned from holiday in June this year, but police told them it could not be tested as it had not been frozen.

Yesterday, South Yorkshire police insisted the test had not been offered earlier as techniques for testing mitochondrial DNA — found in hairs without roots — were not sufficiently sophisticated.

The force has not sent any officers to Rhodes to investigate the latest sighting.

But the forensic science service, a Home Office agency, said tests had been available.

Rob Smith, a forensic science spokesman, said the tests, which are carried out on maternal DNA, would not prove the boy on the beach was Ben, but could eliminate him. If a possible link were shown, blood tests would be taken. "There are similarities to the facial features, which attracted John's attention," said Kerry Needham.



Ben Needham, who went missing in Kos, Greece

Manchester tenants face a luvless future

David Ward

LUV is all around, is a many splendoured thing, makes the world go round and is all you really need.

But Manchester city council has suggested it is not always a suitable form of address between tenant and workman, even when said with due deference over a pot of emulsion.

And perhaps it would be better to steer clear of "mate" too, said a guidance note to council joiners, plumbers, electricians and other tradesmen in the Wythenshawe district of the city. It expressed no opinion about "petal" but said customers were best addressed as Mr or Mrs, Sir or Madam.

The letter has been greeted with a chorus of disapproval by staff and clients. "There's no way I would want to be called madam," said Norah Carlos, treasurer of the Combined Association of Wythenshawe Tenants. "It makes you think of prostitutes."

The letter explained: "Addressing tenants as 'mate' or 'luv' is inappropriate familiarity, and damages the professional relationship between ourselves and our clients. Better to use more formal terms ... until such time as the tenant asks you to do otherwise."

The workers were as unimpressed as the tenants. "It's laughable," said a carpenter. "We all call tenants and each other 'mate' and 'luv'. It just comes naturally. No one takes offence round here. I can't see anyone accepting this — we'll all just ignore the letter. ... I'm all for treating people politely and with respect but this is ridiculous."

The tenants' secretary, Joyce Quayle, said she had no objection to being "luvved". "How can you stop people saying something they have been used to saying all their lives?"

Pete North, the director of City Works, Manchester's direct labour force, conceded even he had been known to address people as "luv". "But this was not a formal directive but a suggestion for finding the best form of address when dealing with tenants.

"Some might welcome informality but others might prefer something less familiar. There is no way that we are banning friendly terms — the letter was simply part of our drive to improve still further our relations with our tenants.

"We welcome the comments that have been made and the suggestions will be modified before the letter is sent to other staff."

Blair shuns McCartney as 'people's laureate'

Dan Glaister and Alan Travis

I can change it round and if you like the style I can make a million for you overnight — Paperback Writer, The Beatles

SIR Paul McCartney has been rejected by the Prime Minister as a candidate for the next Poet Laureate. The small matter that he has never had any poetry published may have had something to do with the decision.

But the Prime Minister's instinct goes against the results of a Guardian/ICM poll which reveals today that McCartney is the most popular public choice. However this result needs to be set in context: of the 1,222 people interviewed, 760 had no opinion.

McCartney won with 219 votes, beating his nearest rival Pam Ayres, who scored 109, or 9 per cent.

Little known, but well established, poets fared badly in the poll. Roger McGough came top with 6 per cent, Wendy Cope and Andrew Motion both scored 2 per cent, and James Fenton just 1per cent.

McCartney's name was suggested by the Northern Ireland Secretary, Mo Mowlam, who felt that he would better embody the demand for a "people's poet".

A source close to Mowlam said: "Any of Sir Paul's lyrics and poems will stand the test of time against some of the modern poets' work. And Mo believes the time has come to make the position of Poet Laureate more high profile, fitting what ordinary people believe to be popular."

□ ICM interviewed a random sample of 1,222 adults aged over 18 by telephone between November 6 to 7 1998. Interviews were conducted across the country and the results have been weighted to the profile of all adults.

Loyalist terrorists in line for early release from prison after Government intervenes to break deadlock over arms decommissioning

Mowlam recognises LVF ceasefire

John Mullin
Ireland Correspondent

Mo Mowlam, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, yesterday took a desperate gamble to shore up the Good Friday Agreement, announcing that she was recognising the hardline Loyalist Volunteer Force's six-month ceasefire.

LVF prisoners will now qualify for the controversial early release programme, which has so far resulted in the release of 201 terrorists. Some of Northern Ireland's most vicious sectarian killers will be freed by July 2000, including one serving 12 life sentences for murders committed only five years ago.

The LVF had indicated to Ms Mowlam that it would decommission some of its weapons if she accepted as genuine its ceasefire, announced in May and declared permanent in August. An army council source said last night it would hand in some of its arms within weeks.

Ms Mowlam hopes that LVF disarmament, the first of any terrorist group, will put pressure on the IRA to begin decommissioning.

The arms impasse is jeopardising Sinn Fein's place in the power-sharing executive, and the row could bring down the agreement, but Sinn Fein immediately quashed hopes LVF disarmament could kick-start IRA decommissioning. Alex Maskey, the party's chief whip in the assembly, said that republicans were highly sceptical of the LVF, responsible for at least 10 murders in the past 12 months.

David Trimble, First Minister and leader of the Ulster Unionists, who had pressed Ms Mowlam to recognise the ceasefire, welcomed the move.

"The LVF has shown it is prepared to change its methodology towards democratic means," he said.

The LVF, strongest in Portadown, Co Armagh, part of Mr Trimble's constituency, was formed under Billy Wright at the height of the Drumcree crisis in 1996. It broke away from the Ulster Volunteer Force because it was opposed to its ceasefire, called in 1994.

The LVF was responsible for a spate of sectarian killings after Wright, 37, was murdered by the Irish National Liberation Army two days after last Christmas. It was opposed to the agreement, but now says it is committed to peaceful means.

Among those LVF prisoners who will walk free within two years are four men convicted of the murders of eight drinkers at a pub in Greysteel, Co Londonderry, five years ago. Gunmen shouted "Trick or treat" as they opened fire at the Rising Sun on Hallowe'en in 1993.

Torrens Knight, then 24, Jeffrey Deeney, 23, Brian McNeil, 26, and Stephen Irwin, 21, were each given eight life sentences at Belfast crown court in February 1995 for the Greysteel massacre. Knight is serving a further four life sentences for the shooting dead of four Catholic workmen at Castlerock, Co Londonderry, in March 1993.

There are 22 LVF prisoners. Nineteen, including eight on remand, are at the Maze. Three more are held at Maghaberry Prison, charged with the murder in March of a fellow LVF prisoner.

Three men accused of the murders of Philip Allen, 36, a Protestant, and Catholic Damien Trainor, 25, are on remand in the LVF's H-block 6 at the Maze. The lifelong friends were shot dead at Bernie Canavan's Railway Tavern in Poyntzpass, Co Armagh, last March.

Accused of their murders are Ryan Robley, 28, Stephen McLean, 28, and Noel McCready, 31. If convicted, they will be free within two years. Although Ms Mowlam can block individual releases, she is unlikely to do so.

David Keys, 26, a fourth man accused of the Poyntzpass murders, was murdered in H-block 6 soon after his arrest in March. He was found hanging in his cell badly beaten, with a pool cue was wedged in his anus.

Three LVF prisoners are in Maghaberry, charged in connection with the murder of Keys. They include Robin King, 32, the commanding officer of the LVF prisoners since Wright's death, and Alfie Philips, 35. .

Ms Mowlam appears convinced that the LVF was not involved in the murder of Brian Service, 35, a Catholic, in north Belfast 13 days ago. It was claimed by the Red Hand Defenders, strong in Portadown.

Inla will have to wait before its three-month ceasefire is recognised. Ms Mowlam is yet to be convinced it is genuine.



Grieving relatives comfort each other outside a Londonderry bar after gunman killed eight at a 1993 Hallowe'en party

Heart health study goes nuts for nuts

Sarah Hall

FOR years they have been high on the list of food facists' hates — fatty, and loaded with calories as they are.

But, from today, nuts join red wine as a self-indulgence found to be paradoxically healthy, since a study has found they can significantly reduce the risk of heart disease.

The research, by nutritionists at Harvard university school of health, focused on the diets of 86,000 female nurses aged 34-59 over 14 years, and found that those who ate five or more portions of nuts a week were a third less likely to be at risk of a coronary than those who ate none.

Indeed, those who ate two to four of the one-ounce portions a week were also less at risk than those who scoffed just one.

Nut-eaters were more likely to be leaner, smoke and drink less, exercise more and take multi-vitamins. But, even when such factors were eliminated, they still cut their risk of heart disease by 35 per cent, the researchers found.

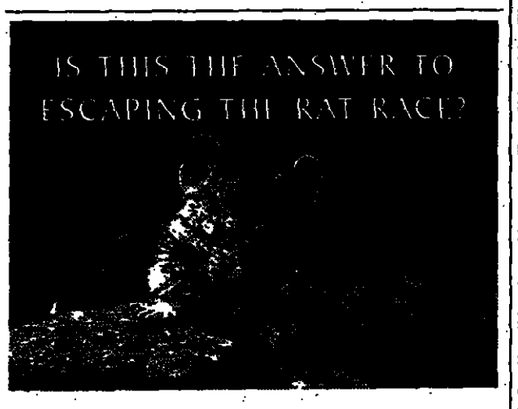
Their findings, published in the British Medical Journal today, show that several factors may contribute to nuts' healthy qualities.

Meir J Stampfer, a co-author of the research, says: "While nuts are very fatty, the fat is mainly unsaturated, which is very beneficial for cholesterol levels.

"Nuts are also rich in an amino acid which causes blood vessels to dilate, thus preventing blood clotting. And some nuts, such as walnuts, contain a sophisticated fatty acid — called linolenic acid — which makes it harder for the heart to get into irregular rhythms, leading to heart attacks."

Dr Stampfer said that, although the study only featured women, similar results had been found in men. The results had also been balanced to accommodate other health factors, such as vegetarianism.

He added: "Eat more nuts: it's definitely more beneficial than not doing so, as long as you do more exercise or alter your calorie intake."



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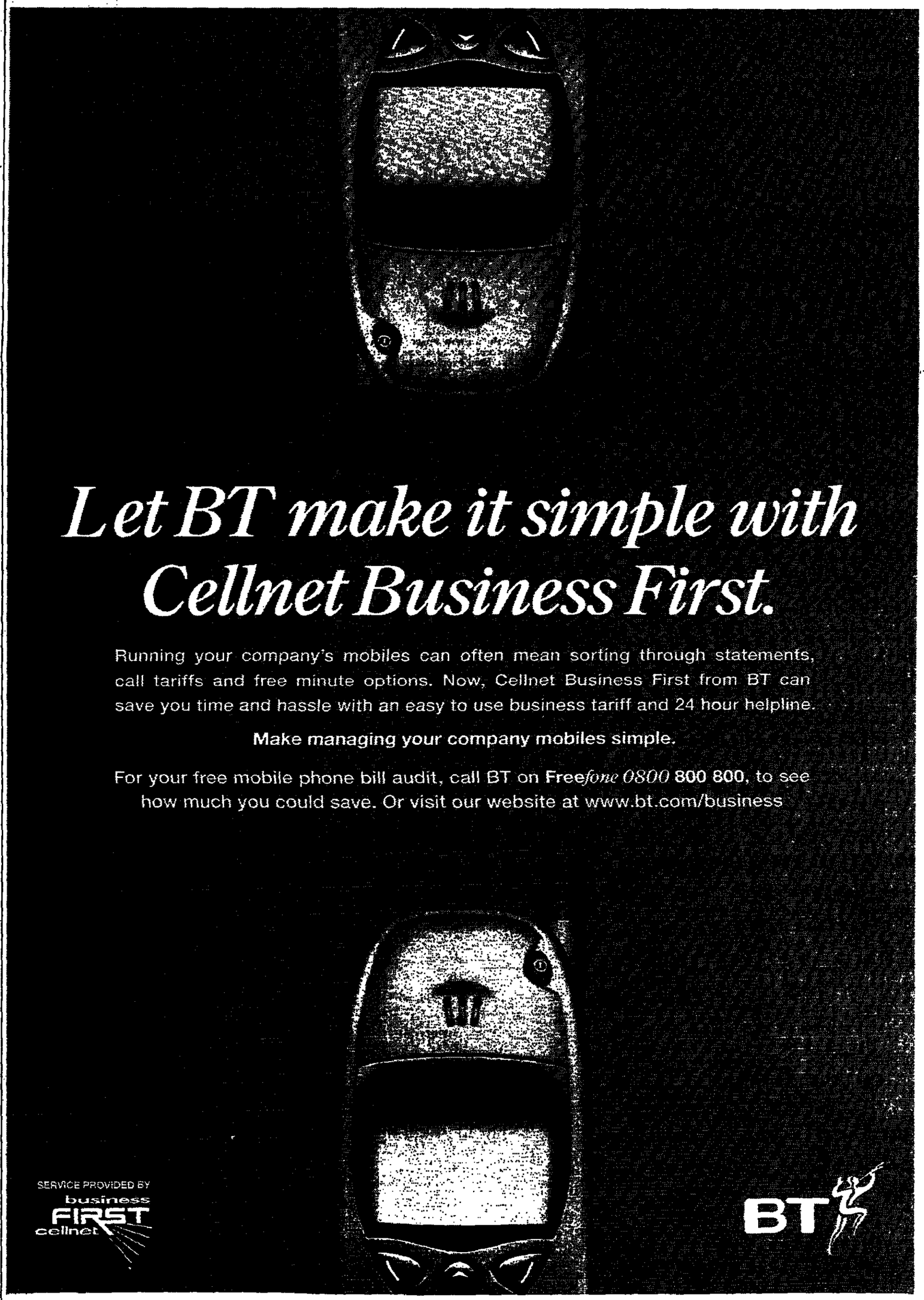
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Killing and abduction threaten peace effort before most international monitors have even arrived

Kosovo truce hangs in balance

Chris Bird in Belgrade

KILLINGS, kidnappings and bickering are threatening Western attempts to end the fighting in Kosovo before most of the international team monitoring the frail peace have even arrived.

"There is a possibility that the ceasefire could fall apart," said a Western diplomat based in the Yugoslav territory, where eight months of fighting between Serb forces and ethnic Albanian guerrillas left villages devastated and forced up to 300,000 Albanians to flee their homes. "The signs do not look good."

The ceasefire is part of an agreement wrung out of the Yugoslav President, Slobodan Milosevic, by the US troubleshooter Richard Holbrooke in which the Serbs escaped Nato air strikes by promising to withdraw most of their forces from the province.

But tension increased last week when five fighters with the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) were killed in a shootout with Serb police near the village of Opterusa, west of the regional capital, Pristina. The KLA apparently paid back in kind on Monday, when the bullet-riddled bodies of two Serb policemen were found near the town of Malisevo.

"We have respected the agreement and you can see how the terrorists treat it from these crimes," said Colonel Bozidar Filic, a Serb interior ministry spokesman. He warned that unless the international monitors made the roads around Malisevo safe, Serb police would step up their presence in contravention of the Holbrooke deal.

Malisevo, a collection of burnt-out homes about 30 miles south-west of Pristina, is the flashpoint. Once a KLA stronghold, it fell to Serb forces in July. Their police now hold a sandbagged, bullet-scarred building in the centre but are surrounded by KLA guerrillas.

The fighting, and reports of kidnapping and disappearances on both sides this week, have brought to a halt talks led by Christopher Hill, the US ambassador to Macedonia.



PHOTOGRAPH: SEAN SMITH

An ethnic Albanian commander with the KLA surveys the aftermath of his army's guerrilla war against the Serbs. The US-brokered ceasefire is under threat after violations by both sides

"Negotiations have reached the level of despair and both sides [ethnic Albanians and Serbs] are to be blamed," said the editor of an ethnic Albanian newspaper. "Belgrade is now justifying the increased number of police with the killing of those two policemen and the kidnap of two Tanjug [Yugoslav state news agency] journalists." The journalists were detained by the KLA last month.

Armed Serb civilians have detained up to 100 Albanians and were last night threatening to kill some unless the pair were released, according to the Kosovo Information Centre, an ethnic Albanian organisation.

Mr Hill's spokesman, Philip Reeker, put a brave face on the talks. "There is continuous dialogue between ambassador Hill and Belgrade and all the people in Kosovo," he said yesterday.

But Mr Hill's attempts to involve the guerrillas in the political process have borne no fruit.

The US had hoped to get a quick temporary deal on Kosovo's status to try to ease the tension on the ground before the arrival of 2,000 unarmed international observers from Europe's OSCE security organisation.

Meanwhile Margaret O'Keeffe, the chief of operations in Yugoslavia for the UN refugee agency, said the ceasefire and troop withdrawals had allowed 75,000 displaced ethnic Albanians to return to their homes.

"We're very anxious to see total observation of that [ceasefire]," she said. "We think at the moment the KLA is being pretty provocative and we would like to see the KVM [international observers] more quickly on the ground."

Bahrie, aged 38 and a mother of six, was scrubbing the war from her carpets with a crowd of other ethnic Albanian women around an open-air swimming pool in the village of Banja, not far from Malisevo, last week.

For her, the issues were simple. "I want the police to go, and to go back to my home."

Lafontaine tipped for top EU job

Martin Walker in Brussels and Ian Traynor in Bonn

THE German finance minister and Social Democrat leader, Oskar Lafontaine, was being tipped in Brussels last night as the next president of the European Commission. Senior German political sources suggested this was a way in which the chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, could sideline a highly ambitious potential rival.

French officials reacted with enthusiasm to reports that the German government had raised the prospect of the Francophile Mr Lafontaine succeeding the current low-key president, Jacques Santer of Luxemburg, when his term runs out in 2000.

"He would be a very good president of the commission," an aide to the French prime minister, Lionel Jospin, said, pointing out that the appointment would re-energise the Paris-Bonn axis, traditionally the driving force of Europe.

While Mr Lafontaine, Chancellor Schröder, and his spokesman all sought to dismiss talk of a Franco-German plot to put Mr Lafontaine in Brussels, none of them denied that the issue had been raised by a senior German official at a dinner in Paris last week.

Mr Lafontaine described the reports as "pure rumour" and joked that he would also like the top job in the Vatican. A German government spokesman, Uwe-Karsten Heye, said Bonn had not yet formed a view on who should replace Mr Santer.



Lafontaine: French backing

Germany takes over the EU presidency in six weeks time and will play a key role in determining who the next president will be. Mr Santer's successor will be unveiled next June.

Mr Lafontaine, an ardent European and neo-Keynesian social democrat, is second only to Mr Schröder in the pecking order in Bonn and has already expanded his finance portfolio by seizing European policy-making powers from another ministry.

A native of Saarland, on the French border, he is the most Francophile member of the German government, a fluent French speaker who sees the French Socialists as soul-mates.

A Lafontaine nomination tabled jointly by Germany and France would be formidable, but could prove controversial with other governments, since he is seen as a hard-driving and professional politician who would bring back the Euro-activism of Jacques Delors.

Student protests come to violent head on the streets of Jakarta

John Aglionby in Jakarta

CHAOS reigned in Indonesia last night as soldiers and riot police fired plastic bullets, tear gas and water cannon to disperse tens of thousands of student-led demonstrators.

The protesters were attempting to converge on parliament in Jakarta to pressure a four-day special sitting into hastening the pace of democratic reform.

State radio said 31 protesters were in hospital, more than half of whom were in a critical condition after being hit by plastic-covered bullets. One policeman was killed in clashes around the parliament building between the security forces and several columns of protesters who had spent the afternoon marching through the city in the rain gathering support.

Many of the legislators were evacuated to a hotel two hours before the day's session was due to finish.

Appointed by the former dictator General Suharto, the 1,000 members of Indonesia's highest sovereign body, the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), are widely reviled as establishment stooges.

Two clashes occurred at crossroads near the city's police headquarters, about half a mile from the parliament. The first came after students forced their way through the security cordon. The soldiers fired into the air and used tear gas to restore order.

Less than half an hour later a column of about 20,000 students and anti-government protesters approached the same junction from another direction.

Finding their way blocked, they used a car to push through the army lines. But the soldiers blocked its way and smashed all the vehicle's windows, showering glass over the four occupants.

The protesters responded by throwing stones, sticks and plastic bottles before the soldiers opened fire with rubber bullets and tear gas.

After scattering briefly, the students returned and a tense stand-off ensued for several hours in pouring rain.

As the evening wore on most protesters drifted home. Hundreds of students retired to a nearby university campus for the night, closely watched by hundreds of soldiers.

But on the other side of the parliament complex, which has been guarded by more than 30,000 soldiers, marines and police this week, the security forced moved in on a crowd of almost 10,000 people who had been peacefully demonstrating on a flyover for several hours.

After giving three warnings, the soldiers fired teargas at those at the back of the demonstration and then fired rubber bullets and water cannon at those at the front, before charging. They lashed out indiscriminately with clubs and truncheons, beating many defenceless people who had fallen to the ground in the panic.

"The government says we are the troublemakers, that we are the ones who are going to disrupt society," said Markus Arianto, a psychology student, after fleeing the scene.



Protesters and security forces clash in Jakarta yesterday PHOTOGRAPH: EFFENDI BA

"But the truth is the complete opposite. It is the government that is afraid of the people and afraid of reform."

The four-day MPR special session, which ends today, is scheduled to repeal the repressive political laws of Gen Suharto — who was forced to resign following rioting in May — introduce replacement legislation and set the date for a new election.

Gen Suharto's successor, B. J. Habibie, has promised a poll in May. But yesterday the interior minister, Lieutenant-General Syarwan Hamid, hinted at a delay until July at the earliest. Analysts say any such hold-up is likely to fuel further protests.

"Indonesia cannot really start on the road to reform and recovery until we have a new government and a new president," said Abdullah, a student leader.

"So the sooner we have elections the better. But the people in there don't seem to realise this," he added, pointing to the green-domed parliament chamber.

Climate change conference

US endorses pact amid coral reef shock

Paul Brown in Buenos Aires

AS A SIGN to the world that the United States is serious about climate change, President Bill Clinton yesterday signed the Kyoto protocol which will legally bind the developed world to reducing its greenhouse gases.

The news came as scientists disclosed that high sea temperatures have killed most of the coral reefs in the Indian Ocean, Western Pacific and Eastern Pacific. Corals in the Caribbean and Brazil have been badly damaged.

Thomas Goreau, president of the Global Coral Reef Alliance, and the foremost world expert on corals, said: "This is an unprecedented natural disaster. Corals are the oceans' most sensitive ecosystem — the canary in the mines as far as the sea is concerned."

Dr Goreau said that although El Niño, the periodic climatic event which causes temporary weather changes, had been a contributory factor, "some of these corals were hundreds of years old and had survived many El Niños".

Don McAllister, of the World Conservation Union, said corals reefs were important economically to more than 100 countries. Coral reefs and white coral sand attract tourism, worth £50 billion a year to the Caribbean.

The signing of the Kyoto protocol was supposed to give new impetus to the talks in Buenos Aires, which became bogged down by the aggressive tactics of Opec, the oil producers' organisation, and the United States' insistence that developing countries should accept targets for the reduction of greenhouse-gas emissions, as well as the industrialised world.

John Prescott, Britain's Deputy Prime Minister, said: "I congratulate the United States. This move reflects a change in the climate of opinion in the US. I am now more hopeful that we are breaking the logjam and will find agreement here in Buenos Aires."

US delegates put pressure on the Opec countries to be more constructive, and a new ministerial group including Britain and Saudi Arabia was formed to push forward the negotiations.

Mr Clinton's signature does not solve his problem of getting the legally binding protocol past a hostile Congress, where a two-thirds majority is needed to ratify it. This difficulty is likely to delay implementation until after the presidential election.

Mr Prescott told the conference: "Time is desperately short and political will is desperately needed. Failure to agree here at Buenos Aires cannot be disguised by fancy diplomatic words. We must redouble our efforts in the next 24 hours to work, work and work again to solve our problems. It is our duty and responsibility to reach consensus."

Anger as bank tries to rule carbon trade

Paul Brown in Buenos Aires

THE World Bank plans to take control of the £60 billion international carbon trading market being set up under the Climate Change Convention, even before the 167 countries involved agree how it will be organised.

Confidential documents leaked to the Guardian at the climate talks in Buenos Aires show that even the United States treasury is alarmed by the move. It sees a conflict of interest with the bank's other role as a developer of fossil fuels, a role in which the bank has a bad reputation among environmental groups and in the developing world.

The World Bank itself fears its move may carry the "political risk of seeming to get ahead of the convention on emissions trading", but sees rich rewards from controlling a system by which Third World countries can sell their pollution allowance to developed countries in return for cleaner combustion technology.

The bank plans to charge 5 per cent commission on all deals. It estimates that the market will be worth £90 billion by 2020, giving a total commission income of £4.5 billion, of which 60 per cent will be "profit above administration costs".

Rather than opt for expensive fossil-fuel reductions at home, companies can buy cheap carbon credits from developing countries, the bank says. Or Western countries building new coal-fired plants to replace inefficient ones in developing countries, could claim those countries' carbon credits because of the efficiency gained.

The leak coincides with a report published yesterday in which the bank is strongly criticised for continuing to build fossil-fuel plants in the developing world. The US Institute for Policy Studies and the International Trade Information Service say this makes the bank unsuitable for any role in the carbon market.

The joint report says that since the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 the bank has spent 25 times more on supporting fossil-fuel projects than on renewable sources of energy. In the past year it has voted almost £800 million for four massive coal burners in China alone.

The bank claims that the new plants are needed to bring electricity to the 2 billion people in the world without it, and much needed economic development. In reality, the report says, almost all the investment goes to existing industrial areas, and large and often dirty industries from the developed world move in to take advantage of cheap power. Only 7 per cent of the power provides electricity to people who previously had none.

The US treasury document says the conflict arises from the bank's role as a developer of fossil fuels, a promoter of greenhouse gas reduction, and now a carbon trader.

Sri Lankan war hero joins new campaign for peace

Susannah Price in Colombo

A HERO who lost his arm while hunting a group of Tamil Tiger separatists who had massacred more than 100 civilians, Asoka Dayaratne is the latest in a growing number of Sri Lankans calling for an end to the 15-year-old war.

"We want to protect the lives of the children of poor people who go to war," he says. "With all my experience I now know this is a war that can not be won. We are wasting lives."

Mr Dayaratne is not alone in his sentiments. In part the growing opposition to the war is inspired by a bloodbath at the end of September in which more than 1,000 soldiers died when the rebels fighting for a Tamil homeland seized the northern town of Kilinochchi in a three-day battle.

"There is a new movement for peace and it's timely," said Kumari Jayawardene of the Women's Coalition, which has brought together groups from all over the country to call for peace talks. "The débâcle at Kilinochchi really made people stop and think again."

Leading members of business, employers' and trade associations issued a declaration calling on all political parties to adopt a common policy on peace.

"We realised that until we solve the ethnic problem we can't have economic freedom, no roads, no infrastructure; everything gets blown up or destroyed," said the co-ordinating chairman, Lalith Kotelawala, who was injured in a bomb explosion at Colombo's Central Bank in 1996.

But one of the biggest obstacles to peace is the lack of agreement between the two main political groups — the governing People's Alliance and the opposition United National Party. The government has been unable to implement its plans for limited devolution because there is no opposition support.

"How can you ever expect the military and Tigers to come together if you can't get the two political parties to talk?" said one exasperated businessman.

There have been street demonstrations for peace, and one group of women blocked the centre of Colombo during the lunchtime rush hour.

"I am always confident that mass pressure does work, because Sri Lanka is a democracy and we do have elections and an opposition. Ms Jayawardene said.

"Politicians have to be sensitive and have to put aside petty conflicts and start reflecting the mood of the people, which is for peace."

News in brief

Israel builds new discord

A DAY after ratifying the land-for-security agreement with the Palestinians, Israel announced yesterday it would begin building a large Jewish neighbourhood in a part of Jerusalem claimed by Yasser Arafat as a future capital.

The Israeli cabinet also decided to attach a series of conditions to the peace accord. The Palestinians are now looking to the United States Middle East peace envoy, Dennis Ross, for help. He is coming to the region today.

"We will not accept any post-agreement negotiations. It is now crucial to have the American side join us ... to oversee implementation of the agreement," the chief Palestinian negotiator, Saeb Erekat, said.

Still, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat was pleased when Israel approved the accord after two weeks of delay.

Despite yesterday's new friction, there were signs of preparations for implementation of the Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank. — *AP, Jerusalem.*

Yeltsin fails to show up

BORIS Yeltsin cancelled his appearance at an official dinner for the Japanese prime minister, Keizo Obuchi, at the last minute, *writes James Meek in Moscow.*

Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov, who is coming to be seen as de facto leader, hosted the occasion instead.

Few Russians believe the official explanation that Mr Yeltsin's decision had nothing to do with his health. This is the third failure in the past few weeks of the president's attempts to return to work in his main remaining capacity, chief diplomat.

The 67-year-old Russian leader, due to step down in 2000, met Mr Obuchi earlier in the day, and a political agreement — touching partly on the South Kurile Islands, owned by Russia but claimed by Japan — was due to have been signed. This will not now happen.

One Japanese diplomat who saw Mr Yeltsin earlier today said the Russian president he "looked like a robot".

Don't stop at air raids, exiles plead

OPPOSITION/What to do about Saddam

Ian Black
Diplomatic Editor

ELITE security forces are on the streets of Baghdad as it becomes increasingly likely that forces led by the United States will make air strikes which opposition groups and millions of ordinary Iraqis hope will be a hammer blow against a hated regime.

According to sources in the Iraqi capital, units of the Emergency Forces, the Special Republican Guard and President Saddam's Fedayeen (self-sacrificers) have been sent into the Al-Thawra and Al-Adhamiya districts in the past two days to demand volunteers for civil defence and militia duties.

But as the US and Britain kept up a drumbeat of warnings about the United Nations weapons inspection crisis yesterday, opposition activists said that the attacks would have to be both hard and sustained if they were to weaken, let alone topple, the Iraqi dictator — and, crucially, had to be followed by a political programme that went beyond punishment.

"People always fear that this sort of operation will not be enough and that the aftermath will be devastating," a well-placed exile said.

"The Pentagon will clearly be able to deliver crippling damage to Iraq's capabilities," another Iraqi said. "But I hope by now they have some idea what to do after that."

Iraqis have been here before. In March 1991 President Saddam's forces were ejected from Kuwait, but Western fear of dismembering Iraq and enhancing Iranian influence led to the Shia intifada in the south and the Kurdish rising in the north being denied aid.

This time around, in the crisis meetings in Washington and Whitehall, no one is calling for anything different. Overthrowing President Saddam is still not on any government's agenda. Officials argue that it would need a ground invasion which would not be justified, legally or politically.

"This strike is not about taking out Saddam," admitted one insider. "If someone takes him out, all well and good. We are rolling a die, striking a blow that will hurt the regime. What comes after that we don't know."


Saddam Hussein meets military commanders in Baghdad

Plans for damaging the regime are well advanced. Apart from armaments factories, action will be aimed at elements of President Saddam's power base seen as indispensible to his rule — the Republican Guard, the Special Republican Guard and an array of intelligence and security services.

The army, which is in poor shape, may be spared. It is seen as the likely source of anti-regime activity: most known coup attempts have come from its ranks. The US, Britain and key Arab states would see this as a poltically "safer" result than some chaotic popular revolution.

The US and Britain have a good intelligence picture of Iraq: satellite surveillance, opposition information and a flow of well-placed defectors have supplied vital details.

But President Saddam can outwit all that. During February's crisis, his intelligence headquarters was quietly moved from the Baghdad suburb of Qardaha to the city's international trade fair.

"The Americans and the British know that now but they certainly didn't know it at the time," said one Iraqi. "We have to assume that Saddam is doing the same again. Nobody who matters to him will be left in his usual place."

However effective military action should prove, there has been little progress in drafting a long-term strategy to replace President Saddam with a more democratic government.

The opposition at home is underground, restricted to pamphlets and occasional attacks on the security forces in the south, though networks are said to exist throughout the country and to have relatively easy courier routes through the border with the Kurdish north.

Externally, the opposition is in disarray. The Iraqi National Congress, once the umbrella for an alliance of different groups, is defunct. Its talented leader, Ahmed Chalabi, is admired for his ability to win political support and money in the US, but criticised for dabbling in armed activity without enjoying a power base at home.

Another group, the Iraqi National Accord, is the current favourite of Western intelligence services, valued for its links with the armed forces and dissident elements in the Ba'ath party — people who are just beyond the core of power and likely to play a role in a post-Saddam Iraq.

But there is not much hope of a match between Western planning and Iraqi capability.

"We've been here so many times before," said Leith Kubba, an exiled activist. "Back in February I was alarmed when the Americans described their military build-up but had no political plan. They had just not thought about what to do if there was an uprising. They were taking one step at a time. So I am sure they must have something up their sleeves. They cannot be that inefficient."

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EUROPE/Britain stands alone save for a single Danish plane

Martin Walker in Brussels

BRITAIN and the United States are once again marching unsupported to the brink of war with Iraq, with only Denmark offering the token support of a single military transport aircraft.

Other Nato and European allies prefer to stress the need for diplomacy, and some openly question what the use of force would achieve.

The new German government, despite its keenness to establish personal links with Tony Blair and Bill Clinton, has cast doubt on the effectiveness of military action.

"The question is, what would a strike accomplish?" said the Green foreign minister, Joschka Fischer, a former pacifist. Significantly, he spoke after a long telephone call with the US secretary of state, Madeleine Albright.

And the Dutch government, which sent token representation to the last rallying of Western forces against Iraq, was not hurrying to volunteer this time.

"We have not yet been asked to assist, so no decision on the use of force has been taken," said a spokeswoman for the foreign ministry.

"We prefer diplomatic solutions, but in the past we have accepted that force can be used to make Iraq comply with UN Security Council resolutions."

But American officials said last night that they were encouraged by the "sympathetic and supportive" statements coming from Europe, which they saw as an improvement on the foot-dragging which greeted previous US sabre-rattling in February.

"The French seem to have learned the lesson that you can't trust Saddam Hussein, and Saddam keeps on letting down people who try to help him," said one US source.

The important difference this time, and the main cause of US relief, is that the French have apparently ruled out their previous tactic of laying on a plane for the UN secretary-general, Kofi Annan, to fly to Baghdad to broker a last-minute (and ill-fated) solution.

"A trip by Kofi Annan to Iraq is not on the agenda," said a spokesman for the French foreign ministry. Nor were the French rushing to support an Iraqi invitation to Mr Annan to fly to Baghdad this week.

Neither Downing Street nor the White House has asked Nato allies for military support, and there are no immediate plans for them to do so. Denmark's offer was unsolicited.

Other EU countries stood by the joint declaration made by the member states' foreign ministers on Monday supporting the UN and calling for Iraq to co-operate with the weapons inspectors.

The new question in transatlantic diplomacy is whether Mr Fischer speaks for a newly hesitant Germany, which could prove less supportive of its US and British allies in the future. Americans have been keeping a watchful eye on Mr Fischer's trip to Moscow this week for meetings with the prime minister, Yevgeny Primakov, and the foreign minister, Igor Ivanov.

A joint statement by Russia and Germany against force would be a serious matter for London and Washington.


A Jerusalem resident helps his daughter try on a gas mask yesterday. Israel is distributing masks in case of an Iraqi attack PHOTOGRAPH: RUTH FREMSON

YOUTH/ Children suffer in isolation

Howard Schneider
In Baghdad

THE children at the Wakady School knew that things were lacking in this era of United Nations sanctions against Iraq. And they blamed America.

"America has hurt us. America is our enemy," said Yassir Jabar Abbas, aged 11. "They attacked the schools, homes and apartments. "Life before was better," said Athara Hammad, aged 13. "We can't buy good food."

Beyond that, however, the world view from the children's classroom in central Baghdad was limited, suggesting that education has been a serious casualty of Iraq's isolation.

Among a group of children aged 10 to 13, none knew their country's army had entered Kuwait in 1990, and none knew other Arab states had taken part in reversing the invasion.

The situation worries UN officials in Iraq, where school enrolment has dropped and illiteracy has increased from 27 per cent to nearly 40 per cent.

In a world of satellite dishes, cell phones and global markets, the children do not know what the Internet is.

David Halliday, a former head of the UN humanitarian programme in Iraq, said: "I think these people are going to have a real problem in dealing with the world in the near future." — *Washington Post.*

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Analysis

The American right



Football's French future 13

Give them that old time religion

The Republican Party has lost the plot, says **Martin Kettle**, and shows few signs of returning to the mainstream

IF politics were only about winning and losing, even today the Republicans would be one of the great success stories of the Nineties. Last week, in the biennial Congressional elections, they won more votes, more seats in the Senate, more seats in the House of Representatives and more state governorships than the Democrats — and they won, what's more, for the third election in a row.

Despite that, the GOP, Grand Old Party, is locked in crisis. This was a pyrrhic victory, because the impact of the party's overall majorities was negated by a handful of key Democratic victories. The setback triggered a meltdown. Last Friday, the charismatic figurehead and principal stategist, Newt Gingrich, resigned, jumping before he was pushed by Bob Livingston, chairman of the House appropriations committee. Livingston's move in turn provoked challenges to senior Republicans, notably House majority leader Dick Armey. Next Wednesday the party's 223-strong congressional caucus will have to vote it all out.

It's more than a squabble over jobs. The day after the new leaders are chosen impeachment proceedings against Bill Clinton go on in earnest. The inquiry by the Republican-dominated House judiciary committee was very much Mr Gingrich's project, but he had plenty of support: not a single Republican voted against when it was set up last month.

Today the Republicans face both ways. In their guts most of them crave the president's humiliation. Last week, however, the voters endorsed what polls have been showing for months, that they reject Republican bounding of the nation's elected leader. As a result, the inquiry is going to be a thing of ghosts and might-have-beens, a constitutional road to nowhere. The question is not whether the impeachment process is doomed, but how it will be laid to rest.

That's a symptom of the party's wider problem. They saw themselves as a party of destiny. They swept to power in 1994 flourishing Newt Gingrich's Contract With America, promising tax cuts, less spending, a weakening of federal power, term limits for elected representatives, strong national defence and a raft of conservative social policies, opposing homosexuality, abortion and working mothers.

Mr Gingrich described himself as a revolutionary. "We are going to change the world", he said, winning such transatlantic admirers as John Redwood. The liberal Republican tradition was pushed to the margins, its paternalist, pragmatic and undoctrinaire strand, strong in the north-east United States, came close to extinction. The tradition of Nelson Rockefeller and William Scranton is today embodied by New Jersey governor Christine Todd Whitman and President Clinton's defence secretary, William Cohen of Maine, but has been eclipsed. With the exception of Connie Morella of Maryland, the liberal tradition is now all but unrepresented within Congress.

THE capture of the party by right-wing ideas and leaders has in some ways been synonymous with the party's capture by Christian conservatives, mainly from the South. This overwhelmingly white movement has focused on a social agenda with no real equivalent outside the United States. Grounded on a belief in the literal truth of the Bible, its issues cluster under "family values" — by which such figures as Pat Buchanan and Pat Robertson mean patriarchy, motherhood, anti-homosexuality and, above all, an obsessive hostility to abortion. Fundamentalists in Congress include Trent Lott of Mississippi, the Senate leader and House whip Tom DeLay of Texas, who may prove to be the only member of the Gingrich leadership to survive the blood-letting.

First cousin to this Southern Christian conservatism is a form of moralising entrenched among northern, often Washington-based intellectuals. The archetypal embodiment of what a recent New York Times survey called "the scolds" is Kenneth Starr. Its most prominent exponent is the editor of the Rupert Murdoch-owned Weekly Standard, William Kristol, who relentlessly presents the Clinton-Lewinsky crisis as a test of the nation's moral rectitude. Mr Kristol is far from alone.

FAILURE this month challenges the right's ascendancy. Both its judgment and agenda were found wanting. Mr Kristol called on the party to focus on the president. Newt Gingrich answered the call, shovelling $10 million worth of anti-Clinton advertising into battleground districts in the final days. The effort was a remarkable failure, mobilising Democrats and demobilising Republicans. Yet Mr Kristol is undaunted. "Social issues conservatism [is] still and always the core of the party's appeal," he insisted in a Weekly Standard article. "Of the two major political philosophies, conservatism imposes the much more stringent and difficult discipline on its would-be leaders. They must defend verities so long accepted that they are no longer fully understood. They must routinely explain why certain ideas are right or wrong, and why the distinctions matter. They must sometimes pursue projects that are at once wholly right and widely unpopular — like the impeachment of a president." His colleague David Frum went further, berating the party for not targeting Bill Clinton more directly. The inference is that the Republicans weren't obsessed enough.

As ever, on left or right, intellectuals are among the last and most shameless defenders of a hopeless cause and it is the party's workaday politicians who have emerged as the force for change. In his one television interview since declaring his candidacy, Bob Livingston said of Mr Gingrich: "He was a revolutionary. I am a manager." The right did suffer a series of defeats. Prominent extremists such as Senator Lauch Faircloth in North Carolina and Governor Fob James of Alabama were ousted while more "moderate" leaders were easily returned.

The lesson for 2000 was immediately drawn. Mr Gingrich was quick to focus on the success of the party's governors as the new model on which the party should build. The instant cliché of the "Bush boys" was invented. Other less glamorous examples of (generally moderate) Republican governors who were heavily re-elected in traditonally Democratic states include George Pataki in New York, Paul Cellucci in Massachusetts, Tommy Thompson in Wisconsin and Tom Ridge in Pennsylvania. "In state after state", the Republican analyst Michael Barone wrote last week, "there is a consensus on public policy, forged by once-controversial Republicans, which is considerably to the right of the consensus Bill Clinton has hoped to forge nationally."

THE election was a defeat for anti-abortion militants. The recent assassination of Dr Barnett Slepian in New York state was a deadly reminder of what such urgings could mean. The campaign rhetoric of defending New York Republican Senator Alfonse D'Amato seemed to draw no boundary lines between acceptable and unacceptable anti-abortion militancy. In spite of his massive campaign spending the incumbent went down; nearly two thirds of New York women voted for his Democratic pro-choice opponent.

Whether the pragmatic, compassionate mood lasts is moot. The Republican problem is that too many activists don't want it. They want to purge America of liberalism and the legacy of the 1960s. Newt Gingrich came to power because he mobilised the party to be militant, and retreating at the age of 55 to Marietta, Georgia, just as General de Gaulle retreated to Colombey-les-deux-Eglises, he may do it again.

The Republican Party is so distinctively American that it may seem perverse to treat its problems as part of a more general crisis of the right. And yet within the last three years, right-wing parties in Britain, Germany, France and Italy have all lost power to moderate centre-left opponents whose policies and pragmatism owe a lot, often explicitly, to "New Democrat" ideas. Huge differences remain. And the circumstances which have brought these right-wing parties to defeat are necessarily more local than global. Nevertheless, the aggregate experience is striking. Ten years ago, parties of the right enjoyed an era of triumph. In Britain and America, the right governed with a confident sense of its historical destiny. Now the left has redefined itself and in turn eclipsed the right. As the century draws to an end, it is the right, not the left, that has lost the plot of our times.













Driving in the right hand lane

Congress

Bob Livingston of Louisiana, served in US Navy, Roman Catholic, "as thrilling as a spreadsheet" according to Newsweek.

Henry Hyde of Illinois. Extra marital affair disclosed. Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee considering the impeachment dossier. Behind a law limiting federal support for abortion services.

Newt Gingrich of Georgia (above left with second wife). PhD in history. Just resigned as Speaker (leader) of the House of Representatives, shortly to leave Congress altogether. Unveils "contract with America" in 1994 and after Republican victory that year becomes Speaker in the first Republican-controlled House for 40 years. Receives multimillion dollar advance on HarperCollins book deal which he pays back after it is described as ploy by Rupert Murdoch to buy favour. Fined $300,000 after ethics investigation. Still seen as presidential contender.

Icons

Ronald Reagan (cover left, above with Shirley) movie actor, trade unionist, governor of California and two-term president remains the great favourite, especially for his defence buildup and tough foreign policy positions.

Barry Goldwater, defeated Republican candidate in the 1964 elections, for whom there remains more than a sneaking regard. He urged bombing North Vietnam into the stone age.

Yesterday's men

Republican liberals such as **Nelson Rockefeller** and **Dwight Eisenhower** are in the shadows. **Richard Nixon** (cartoon above top right) is not often celebrated — he lost the presidential election to J.F. Kennedy in 1960, bounced back to win in 1968 before taking the United States off the gold standard, introducing price and wage controls, beginning negotiations for US withdrawal from Vietnam, bombing Cambodia, visiting China and resigning in 1973.

Contenders

The Bush Brothers George W., governor of Texas (with his father above right) and his younger sibling, Jeb (right 2), governor of Florida. Sons of ex-president George (who lost against Bill Clinton in 1992) and Barbara Bush, activists, "compassionate conservatism". Both speak Spanish. George Jr says: "When I was young I did some foolish things such as heavy drinking but said there is nothing in his personal life to stop his running for president.

Commentators

William Kristol, editor of Weekly Standard, which recently called for American states to "reaffirm" their anti-sodomy laws. He is one of a nestus of right-wing journalists and commentators including **David Frum**, **David Keene** and, from an older generation, **Robert Novack**, **Patrick Buchanan** (a former contender for the presidential nomination above lower right with dog) and **William Safire**. Journals include Commentary, the Wall Street Journal and such think tanks as the American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation.

Judges and other moralisers

Supreme Court Judges **Clarence Thomas** and **Antonin Scalia**. **Robert Bork**, his nomination bitterly opposed by liberals, says the United States is in its final throes chaos punctuated by spasms of violence and ardicalism. **Kenneth Starr** (top left facing the press) independent counsel in the Whitewater case since 1994, extended to cover the Paula Jones case and Lewinsky testifying next week to House committees about impeachment investigation. "There is a right only to a private family life". "Theo-conservatives" include **Pat Robertson** (offering some old-time religion, above right), and the Rev **Richard John Neuhaus**, who strongly argues public policy should uphold Christian tenets.

Photographs: Eric Draper, Joe Marquette, Doug Mills, Steve Uelckert.
Cartoon: Gibbard.
Martin Kettle is the Guardian's US editor.

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T H Flowers

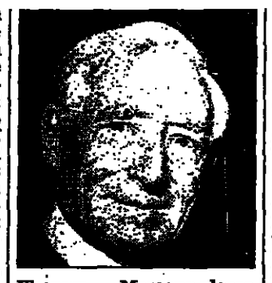
The colossus of codes

THE WORK of the Post Office engineer Tommy Flowers, who has died aged 92, notably shortened the second world war. Between 1943 and 1944 he built one of the world's first electronic digital computers, the Colossus, used by the British codebreakers at Bletchley Park to decipher the complex teleprinter codes employed by the German High Command.

Colossus proved that logical electronic computing was possible, and it could do in seconds what it took human codebreakers weeks, or months, to achieve. It enabled the Code and Cypher School to unravel the stream of Nazi messages — labelled by Bletchley operatives "fish" — between Berlin and the eastern and western fronts.

Flowers's involvement with Bletchley began with Alan Turing, the great Cambridge mathematician, who had been central to the breaking of the German Enigma Morse ciphers, which had provided the British with access to messages on the movement of enemy forces. He suggested that the Post Office's Dollis Hill research station in north London, and Flowers in particular, be brought in to assist with the 24-valve "Heath Robinson" — a mechanical computing machine, developed to handle the fish material. During the the 1930s Flowers's work at Dollis Hill on signalling and system designs helped to make possible long distance telephone calls without the aid of an operator.

The Heath Robinsons were — for the vastly complex job of decoding fish messages — slow, and had a tendency to



Flowers . . . Meccano please

catch fire. Flowers argued that the solution lay in replacing their mechanical-switching units with a valve-based machine. Despite the reservations of many at Bletchley Park, he won the support of Dollis Hill management and on December 8, 1943 a prototype, one-ton, 16-feet by seven feet Colossus computer was demonstrated.

Although Flowers described it as a "string and sealing-wax affair", the machine was enormously advanced, and much more accurate than the Heath Robinsons. It was also huge — containing 1,500 valves. Its successor, Colossus Mark II, was installed at Bletchley Park and was operational by the early morning of June 1, 1944 — five days before the Normandy landings. It was far faster and had 2,500 valves. By the time of the Allied victory there were 11 Collossi in operation, but they were subsequently destroyed. The last survivor ended up at the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) in Cheltenham and was only destroyed in 1968.

Tommy Flowers was born in London and demonstrated an early aptitude for engineering. When told of the birth of his sister, he complained that he would rather have a Meccano set; he was five years old. He was an apprentice in mechanical engineering at Woolwich Arsenal and subsequently took a London University engineering degree while working at Dollis Hill. The war apart, he stayed there for most of his working life.

Shortly after Colossus Mark II, Flowers moved back to Dollis Hill and returned to his research in electronic telephone systems. The full potential of this work, however, was not realised until after his retirement, when silicon integrated-circuit technology was developed. Nevertheless, Flowers remained confident that his ideas had a future.

It was not until the 1970s that the existence of the Colossus machines was officially acknowledged. And Flowers, who had been awarded the MBE, lived to see his work more fully recognised. He was awarded an honorary doctorate from Newcastle University in 1977 and three years later the Post Office's first Martlesham Medal. In June 1996, he attended the unveiling of a reconstructed Colossus, 52 years after it had proved so invaluable in the liberation of occupied Europe.

Tommy Flowers is survived by his wife, Eileen, their sons Kenneth and John, and three grandchildren.

Jonathan Fineberg

Thomas Harold (Tommy) Flowers, engineer, born December 22, 1905; died October 28, 1998

Rosemary Stjernstedt

Homes fit for Londoners

IN 1950, when the London County Council set up its new housing division, Rosemary Stjernstedt, who has died aged 86, became the first woman architect to attain the senior grade one status. She was one of five group leaders who constituted the backbone of the department.

That post-war era of high expectations and idyllic planning schemes offered women unlimited opportunities for dedication, but when it came to careers it was a man's world. When Rosemary had arrived at the LCC's headquarters at County Hall the rule was "the contract of service with the council terminates as from, and including, the date of marriage" — for women only.

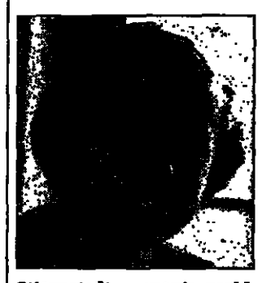
But Rosemary was a born leader. She took a personal interest in every member of her team, but never forgot the building they were engaged on. She made clear decisions, and was not in the least concerned about their popularity. She worked on a flagship project for the LCC — the Alton East estate at Roehampton — where she could use an expertise she had gained in Sweden in housing. When the LCC broke up in 1964 she followed the new chief architect, Edward Hollamby, to Lambeth and had responsibility for the large Central Hill housing scheme.

Hollamby describes her as one of the best architects he ever worked with, sensitive to the details of buildings and their sites, and always on excellent terms with those who worked with her. He greatly regretted her leaving to work at the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. Blonde, with a classical profile and a curling lip, she was one of a generation of architects dedicated to public service.

Born and educated in Birmingham, she followed the 1930s tide, which took bright architects towards Scandinavia, and spent six years working in the Stockholm town and country planning office. She also undertook private commissions for Ralph Erskine, with whom she also sailed. She married a Swedish lawyer, but it did not work out and she returned to England with her small son, Robert. It was her experience of Swedish design and building that ensured her a job with the LCC. Now that local government is more or less interned, it is hard to convey the commitment that those young professionals brought to their jobs, and the pride they felt in serving the community.

It was not until the exhibition of women's work at the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1986 that a tentative spotlight was turned in Rosemary's direction. Young people from groups she led moved on to highly successful careers, for example Hugh Morris, who became chairman of Robert Matthew Johnson-Marshall. Why did she not do likewise? Maybe the moves to Lambeth, and later to the ministry, may be seen as bids for status. Increasingly she longed to retire.

Her mother retired to Aber-



Stjernstedt . . . man's world

dovey, in Wales, and Rosemary found a pair of cottages above Derwenlas that she turned into a blissful dwelling. She had a keen eye for buildings, landscapes, plants and edible funghi; also for shellfish and boats. The snag with Rosemary was that you could never enjoy a walk. No sooner started than she spotted a rare fungus high on the hillside and, perforce, we took a right turn and spent the next hour gathering a gourmet supper. It was the same on beaches.

She is survived by her son, and her partner Fred Parker.

Diana Rowntree

Rosemary Stjernstedt, architect, born June 11, 1912; died October 31, 1998

Eugene Powell

Mississippi magic

EUGENE Powell, who has died aged 89, was a Mississippi community musician and one of the last links with the 1930s golden age of acoustic blues recordings. In 1936 he cut a handful of 78rpm records in New Orleans for the Bluebird "race" label. The company's market was confined to black communities and, played to oblivion few of its old shellac discs survived, although white collectors prized such rarities as works by one "Sonny Boy Nelson" — eventually revealed to be Powell.

He was born in Utica, in the Mississippi delta. His mother was a black domestic, his father a white man, which gave him ambivalent status, fair colouring and the disliked nickname "Red". It divided him from other black people and was responsible for him losing an eye to a hostile youngster's bow-and-arrow. He met his father once only — he gave the boy a gun.

Farming from childhood, Powell was fascinated by music. When he was seven his mother bought him a guitar. Three days later he was playing it. Soon he was travelling to Parchman prison farm on Sundays to play for the sergeant's children.

He embarked on the life of an itinerant musician, inspired by the guitarist brothers, Rich and Prince Flowers, and a blind man who used the bravado black folk-name Stack O'Lee. He teamed-up with a violinist, adding Johnny Holts, another guitarist, then went to Memphis, where he began playing on Beale Street with Richard "Hacksaw" Harney to "second" him. When Powell was 20, his cousins, the Chatmons, settled in Hollandale and it was with three of them — Sam, Lonnie and Armenter (known as Bo Carter) — that Powell and his first wife, Mississippi Matilda, travelled to New Orleans to record.

In 1940 he moved to Greenville, one of Mississippi's few cities. Apart from a short stay in Decatur, Illinois, there he stayed. It was not until the 1960s blues revival was underway that his name re-emerged — Sam Chatmon, a brilliant musician, kept singing Powell's praises, but he, and with a disabled second wife, Carrie, would not leave home. It was Chatmon's own wife who directed me to him when I was travelling through the south in 1972: I found him sitting under a tree, warm and welcoming.

Powell was reunited with Harney at that year's Smith-

> He met his father once only — he gave the boy a gun

sonian Festival of American Folklore, still puzzling at the turn of events that had taken him north. He could have travelled more widely but he was devoted to caring for Carrie, who had helped him when he was down-and-out. As he told me: "Just because somebody wore out, you don't throw them away."

But he loved to play music. When London guitarist Simon Prager called to see him, he had let his old Gibson Kalamazoo, a classic guitar, gather dust. As soon as he saw Prager's own instrument, however, he wanted to play. More than 25 years later the visitor remarked on Powell's sheer musicality and his command of an earlier style, which included ragtime elements and the kind of finger-picking virtuosity not part of the school associated with Robert Johnson, which has become synonymous with Mississippi blues.

Powell enjoyed talking, too. He would tell how he'd dreamt that the devil taught him to play and had juicy tales of his rambling days. But he was no macho-man consumed by ego; he was respectful when talking of women, and thoughtful too — as the unusual lyrics of some of his songs illustrate. Above all, he was direct and open, qualities rare in a region whose history has determined distrust between the races.

When Carrie died Powell got a new lease of life; he travelled north again and recorded, surviving to see the outlaw blues become "respectable" in his home state, and endorsed for its earning-power by Greenville's all-white Chamber of Commerce. He played for local festivals, then astounded his friends by remarrying.

Sadly, as he grew less robust, his younger wife became indifferent. He relied increasingly on friends for stimulation and care, among them the astonishing, truck-driving photographer, Axel Kustner, who frequently jumped on a plane from Germany to take care of his needs. An appearance in the Alan Lomax video, *The Land Where The Blues Began* put cash in his pocket, and students continued to arrive.

Many are indebted to his generosity, and some returned it, notably the young black artist Keb' Mo', who studied with Powell, co-crediting *Love Blues* on his first album and ensuring his mentor earnt royalties.

Val Wilmer

Eugene Powell, guitarist, born December 23, 1908; died November 4, 1998



Powell . . . guitarist of sheer musicality and finger-picking virtuosity VAL WILMER

A Country Diary

NORTHUMBERLAND: A gale blew down the fence between our property and the village hall, so when we renewed it we had a gate put in to give access to our field for village functions. Last week a huge bonfire was built and on Guy Fawkes Night the community celebrated with fireworks, sparklers, hot soup and sausages. For days before the event, bent figures humping combustible rubbish, branches and even whole trees came knocking on our door for permission to troop past our stables and into the field to add fuel to the growing pile. The fire must have been seen for miles around.

Until the mid-1700s, the term "bonefire" was in common use, such conflagrations were lighted on anniversaries and occasions like the eves of St John and St Peter, and their origin can be traced to the pre-Christian era. Cornish bonfires are believed to be a survival of Druid fires. On November 5, the fire on Lincoln's Inn Fields was an impressive affair with several hundred cartloads of fuel and more than 30 "guys" burnt. Householders who lived in the vicinity must have trembled for their dwellings when the wind blew hot ash in their direction.

VERONICA HEATH

Mortgages

NOTICE OF INTEREST RATE VARIATION

The following interest rates for mortgages provided by Banking Direct, a Division of Bank of Scotland, will apply with effect from 1st November 1998 for both new and existing borrowers.

Banking Direct Mortgage Rate (Variable) 8.69% per annum.

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CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

IN AN article about the Guardian Jerwood Award, pages 22 and 23, Society, November 11, we said the Free Form Arts Trust was hoping to move to new premises in Hackney within the next three years, which would cost £33 million to develop. The total cost will be £1.5 million, not £33 million. We accept that this is a particularly misleading error since it gives an impression of Free Form as something other than the small-scale charity it is. Apologies.

IN A News in Brief item, page 4, November 11 we identified Derek Bentley as the man "who was hanged for shooting a policeman in 1952 . . ." Derek Bentley did not shoot Pc Miles. Christopher Craig shot him.

IN A report headed, Euros hand-out to shoppers has £10 sting in tail, page 11, November 11, we said that Cooplands, the family bakers in Rotherham, were not taking part in the Rotherham euro scheme and that all their cakes were priced only in sterling. They assure us that they are taking part in the scheme and that everything in the shop had a little orange sticker giving the equivalent euro price. The only un-euroed things were the curd tarts referred to in our first paragraph.

IN A note page 6, Travel, November 7, at the end of an article headed, Retreat from the past, we gave the wrong departure station from Paris for Vichy. We should have said Gare de Lyon. The journey time is not 30 minutes. It is three hours.

WE GAVE the wrong telephone number for the National Childbirth Trust, page 20, Jobs & Money, November 7. The correct one is 0181 992 8637.

ON THE front page of Society, November 11, we had an item which said: The Home Office has refused to increase compensation to a Surrey officer who was dismissed on the grounds of mental instability after he refused to attend a party during working hours. We have been asked to make it clear that the police officer worked for the Metropolitan Police, not Surrey.

ANGELA Harrison, founder and co-ordinator of Grandparent & Grandchild Support, referred to in a report headed, Grandparents who live in junkies' hell, pages 10 and 11, November 2, has asked us to give her helpline number (as an addition to the one published with the article). It is 01789 298657.

LAURENCE Binyon, the poet, was not Lawrence Binyon, as he appears in *The Faber Book of War Poetry* and in several recent references in the Guardian, one in a correction, this column, November 11.

ROBIN MORRIS, a medical student at Sheffield, referred to in the Guardian Weekend's look at *University Challenge*, page 62, November 7, is Robert Morris. Sorry.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Please quote date and page number. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor by telephoning 0171 239 9589 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Surface mail should be sent to Readers' Editor, The Guardian, 119, Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER. Fax: 0171 239 9897. E-mail: reader@guardian.co.uk

Birthdays

The Most Rev Dr George Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury, 63; Sir John Coles, former head of the Diplomatic Service, 61; Adrienne Corri, actress, 67; Jeff Ennis, Labour MP, 46; John McGuckian, chairman, Ulster Television, 59; Whoopi Goldberg, actress, 43; Alexandra Shulman, editor, Vogue, 41; Helen Southworth, Labour MP, 42; Howard Wilkinson, football manager, 55.

Death Notices

BERIOSOVA, Svetlana, ballerina with The Royal Ballet from 1952 to 1975. Died peacefully at the Pembridge Unit, St. Charles' Hospital, London, on Tuesday 10th November, 1998, after a short illness borne with immense courage and patience. She will be deeply missed by all who loved her. Funeral service at All Saints Russian Orthodox Cathedral, 67 Ennismore Gardens, London SW7 on Thursday 19th November, 1998, at 12.30pm, to be followed by a private cremation. No flowers, please, but donations if desired to The Cancer Research Campaign, 10 Cambridge Terrace, London NW1 4JL.

COWAN, Professor Margaret, C.B.E., F.R.S., F.R.A. Mother of Nik and James, died peacefully in hospital on 7th November, aged 77 after a long illness endured with determination. No memorial service, as she requested. Funeral on 17th November at the University Church, The High, Oxford at 11 am. No flowers, donations to Alzheimers Society.

To place your announcement telephone 0171 713 4567 or fax 0171 713 4749 between 9am and 5pm Mon-Fri.

LEWIS, Jean (née Andrews), peacefully at St. Thomas' Hospital, London on 5th November, 1998. Greatly loved by her husband Rod, and by her family, friends and colleagues. Funeral service (for family and close friends) at Woodvale South Chapel, Lewes Road, Brighton on Wednesday 18th November at 1.00pm, followed by burial at The Woodland Burial Ground, Bear Road, Brighton. Sunflowers may be sent to Christopher Saringer Funeral Services, 67 High Street, Rottingdean, East Sussex. Tel. 01273 308000. Donations for The Jean Andrews Keyworth Children's Fund, may be sent c/o Chris Madins, S.A.O., Keyworth Primary School, Fauncs Street, London, SE17 3TR.

LOVE, Dudley Boord, former Director of Education of Solihull, served in Middlesex Yeomanry and Indian Army 1936-1945, died suddenly on November 9th, aged 84. Much loved and devoted husband of Bubbles and father of Susan, Mark, Timothy and Charlotte, who will be greatly missed by all his family and friends. Funeral service at 2.00pm on Tuesday 17th November at St. Andrews Church, Walberswick, Suffolk. Family flowers only. Donations if desired to Vellore Medical College and Hospital, South India. P.O. Box 25122, London, SW1V 3WD.

MILLAR, Suddenly on Tuesday 10th November at the Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend. Robert James, of 141 Park St., Bridgend. Beloved husband of the late Pat (Fleming), a loving father to James and Kate, a much loved brother to Anne, and dear friend of Jan. Funeral on Tuesday 17th November 1998. Service at St. Illtyd Church, Newcastle, Bridgend at 1.30pm, followed by interment at Bridgend Cemetery. Family flowers only by request please, but donations may be sent to Y Berthyn Newydd, Princess of Wales Hospital Bridgend. All further enquiries to E. Morgan & Son, 37 Wyndham St., Bridgend, tel no.: 01656 653242.

Births

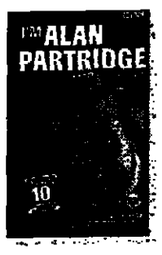
FORDE/CARLISLE. To Julie Carlisle and William Forde on 10th November 1998, a son, Thomas Stanley Forde, first grandchild for Vint and Dorothy Carlisle and Tom and Helen Forde.

I'm Alan Partridge

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Comment

Diary

Matthew Norman

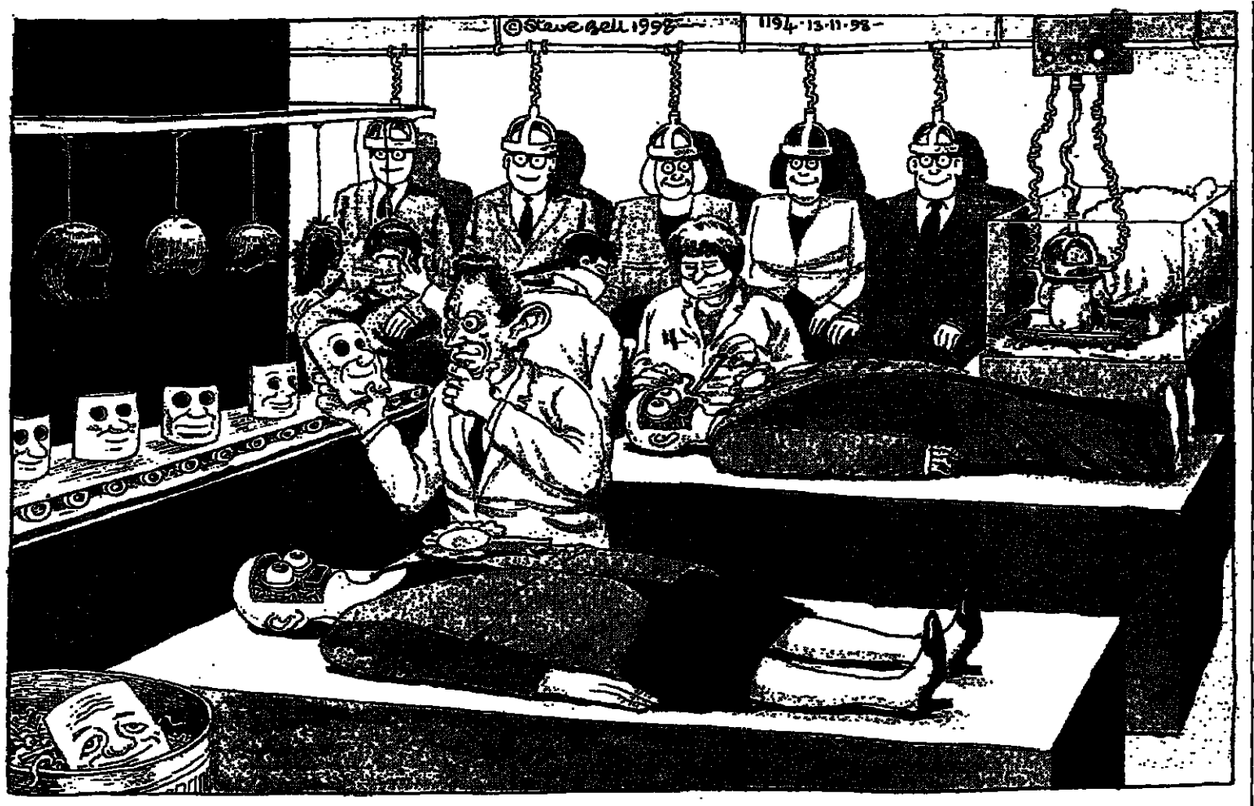
THE Phil Hall Hotline (0171 713 4370) begins to bear fruit. A friend of the News of the World editor, who on Sunday outed Nick Brown as gay, calls and asks that he be known as "Mr Death" (he wishes, he says, to remain a friend). "If you meet Phil these days, you'll see he has a lustrous head of chestnut hair," says Mr Death, "but that's because he bulk-buys Grecian 2000. He has actually been grey as a badger since he was 21." Good grief. "Also," continues Mr Death, "he's always been a West Ham fan, and when he was a boy in Chadwell Heath near Romford, he liked to spend his weekends at Upton Park standing on the North Bank (now the Centenary Stand) among the Inter City Firm." The ICF is our most infamous collection of football thugs. "Phil liked to be one of the boys, but he didn't want his parents to know because they were fairly strict (his dad was a scoutmaster and his mum looked after the girl guides). So he hid his 15-hole Doc Marten's and Sta-Prest trousers in a coal bunker in the garden." Intriguing stuff, with a nice Monty Python feel. It could be a set-up, of course, but since Phil refuses to answer calls or respond to an e-mail, it is hard to know either way.

THE Spectator is oddly quiet this week, with not a word from any of the resident sages about the iniquities of this newspaper. Nor is there so much as a hint of the savage ranting about Mohammed Al Fayed that is such a staple of its pages. There is, however, one curiosity. The whole of page 15 is devoted to a very lucrative advert for Harrods. What on earth are the madmen up to now?

MEANWHILE, Mr Tony Blair's relationship with Paul Johnson continues to baffle. Can it really be true, people ask, that Mr T adores my sane and rational friend, and genuinely thinks him (as he wrote in a letter Paul proudly displays in his house) "one of the most remarkable people of our country"? Apparently not. According to a source who believes himself to understand the workings of the PM's mind, Mr Tony secretly shares the mainstream view of Paul, but assiduously flatters him because his Daily Mail articles are a very useful short cut to the hearts and minds of Middle England. "Tony is not a fool," says this source, "but there's no indignity on earth he won't suffer to secure the Worcester Woman vote."

I AM distressed to learn that my old friend DJ Collins has suffered a trauma. While working at Millbank, and living with his parents in Tunbridge Wells, DJ used to bombard the papers with amusing eulogies to New Labour, you may recall, in the form of letters to the editor. But these days his old colleagues are displeased with him, because DJ has gone to work as chief spin doctor at the AEEU, and spends his time causing them problems by seeking publicity for Ken Jackson, the General Secretary, as he tries to pressurise Mandy Mandelson into not watering down the Fairness At Work legislation. Meanwhile, on Wednesday night in Maida Vale, north west London, DJ (who is fine now) was mugged at gunpoint by a 15 year-old-boy. The boy has not been caught. The entire male workforce at Millbank Tower will soon be helping police with their enquries.

THIS week's Bookseller is tremendously excited about a new publication, and devotes its front page to the news. "1176 Adam Smith published The Wealth Of Nations," it shouts at the top. "1848, Karl Marx published The Communist Manifesto," it roars beneath that. "1936 John Maynard Keynes published General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money," it bellows below that. Finally, at the bottom of the page, we reach the grand crescendo, which is positively screamed in massive type. "1988 George Soros publishes the book no one dare ignore." Ah well, what's one little decade with a work to rival Karl Marx?



Celebrities and sex go together. That's my message to our rulers

Decca Aitkenhead



IT USED to be the case that ambitious people went into politics in the hope that they would one day become famous. A better strategy these days might be to get famous first, then think about going into politics. On Monday, Baroness Jay cast around for names who might work with the Women's Unit, and came up with Geri Spice and Emma Thompson.

On Tuesday, Labour hopefuls for the mayor of London's job learned that they would benefit more from a proven record in light entertainment, say, than in left-of-centre politics. The modern taste for celebrity politics is now such that these things pass almost unremarked; it was Emma Thompson's refusal to take up Baroness Jay's offer which made the bigger headline, not the fact of the offer itself.

The principle of the celebrity figurehead is well-established. Ever since Princess Diana demonstrated that her personal endorsement could transform a worthy issue into a dazzling media *cause célèbre*, campaigners have assumed that no wrong can be put right without celebrity intervention. The assumption edged from charity work into politics, with the UN appointing roving personalities like Magenta de Vine to "raise awareness" for women's rights.

Now it has reached party politics, and Tony Blair recruits pop stars to make Britannia cool, and wants a famous mayor. Just as every ad campaign must have a face, so now every political campaign needs a name.

At a time when political strategists are looking to business for ideas, it seems an excellent plan. If the Spice Girls were worth millions as the face of Pepsi, Geri Spice must surely be worth something as the face of the Women's Unit. As TV Times sells more copies than the Economist, would Joanna Lumley not make a more popular mayor than Ken Livingstone? On the face of it, she obviously would.

This would be quite a good argument, were it not for the other one currently coming out of Downing Street. In the same week that Baroness Jay was trying to round up celebrity assistants, her Government was arguing that what public figures do in their private lives is of no consequence at all. All that matters is the conduct of political figures in their public life; their private preferences are an irrelevance. This argument can concede that film stars may forfeit some of their privacy by giving intimate interviews on the subject of their sex lives. But politicians give interviews about their views on EMU and interest rates, and their sex lives are therefore off limits.

THIS is also a sound argument. But you cannot both seek to appropriate the power of celebrities by enlisting them as politicians, and then say that the private lives of politicians are off limits. The whole point of celebrities, and the source of their influence, is the public's sense of involvement in their private lives. The more we knew about Princess Diana's sex life, the more iconic she became; had we known no more about her private life than Margaret Beckett's, we would have cared little about eating disorders, and even less about abolishing landmines. If politics is to be conducted through personality instead of argument, voters will demand that they know who these personalities are; after all, teenagers are only persuaded to buy Pepsi instead of Coke when they have read all about Baby Spice's boyfriends in Just 17. If it turns out that the star is not the private person we had thought, then this is more relevant than a policy U-turn.

Even if Blair could persuade the public to back someone on the basis of his or her famous personality, and to then take interest only in his or her public policy pronouncements, problems persist. Celebrities are uniquely effective at publicising causes or campaigns. However, they seldom if ever attatch themselves to an argument which has not already been won. For example, Tom Hanks was properly praised for his part in Philadelphia — but he only played the sympathetic Aids victim several years after newspapers had stopped proposing HIV leper colonies. Models risk nothing by saying breast cancer is a bad thing, and any old celebrity will back gay rights these days.

These are perfectly good causes, but they pose few radical challenges. When Ken Livingstone passed gay-friendly policies on the GLC in 1981, the Sun branded him the "most odious man in Britain". It is doubtful that many celebrities, if given his job, would have been willing to act likewise.

Celebrity is a horribly fickle commodity. Baroness Jay wanted the media to be talking about the problems faced by teenage girls this week, but instead they ran stories about Emma Thompson's snub and Geri's suitability as a role model. Princess Diana's patronage won support for good causes — but when she removed it for personal reasons, the abandoned charities were devastated. Beyond a fascination for Diana, there turned out to be little enduring support left behind when she and the cameras swept on. Personalities are fragile hooks on which to hang big political issues.

THIS week, the National Secular Society launched its own campaign against an Act of 1860. Under this law, anyone who protests inside a church can be prosecuted on a charge far more serious than breach of the peace; it is an odd, arcane law, privileging the church, and should no doubt be abolished. The society is writing to sympathetic people to support their campaign.

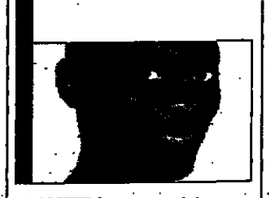
Unfortunately for the society, it is organising its campaign around the prosecution of gay campaigner Peter Tatchell, who has been charged following his protest at the Archbishop of Canterbury's Easter service. Peter Tatchell's name is not one to rouse much sympathy, even in the most liberal of quarters; friends and colleagues in receipt of the letter of appeal have tended to cheer this law and toss it away. I'd wish the society's campaign well, but hold out little hope for it.

As long as political campaigns are fought on personality, as opposed to argument, the National Secular Society will have to hang around and wait for someone like Chris Smith to cause a fuss in a cathedral, and that will be quite a wait. Meanwhile, rather more pressing matters like who will be mayor of London are determined on the basis of celebrity ratings. And Blair will doubtless soon lauch a campaign for privacy, and recruit some famous personalities to lead it.

He was lonely and depressed and used drink to salve the pain

Learn from footballers

Ekow Eshun



IN HER latest novel Another World, Pat Barker, Booker prize-winning author of the Regeneration trilogy, describes the swirling, uncertain relationship between memory and present-day experience: the past not only informing the present, but pressing on it, warping it out of shape until the distinction between what we know to be true and what we'd like to believe becomes invisible.

As evidence, she recounts the instability of the Blitz years, when trusted neighbours would rob each other's homes during air raids, and how, years later, such acts would be buried under a collective memory of shared wartime endeavour.

A similar process seems to work across Britain as a whole when we come to consider our place in the world. Despite strong evidence to the contrary, we still like to think that ours is a nation twinned to another country called "Best". We pride ourselves on having the best police force in the world, the fairest justice system, the finest television — even the best beef.

As Barker points out, we are constantly engaged in a revision of the present to match our long-held beliefs and prejudices. But what happens when it's no longer possible to make that kind of settlement between two worlds? How do we respond when it becomes apparent that what we would like to consider as the truth is contradicted by the evidence before us?

SURELY the bitterest irony of the Stephen Lawrence case, for instance, is that Neville and Doreen Lawrence believed in the essential probity and fairness of the police until it came to the investigation of their son's death. Now their despair at the institutional racism which stymied the hunt for Stephen's killers threatens to become a national collapse in faith at the failure of Met Commissioner Paul Condon to acknowledge the culpability of his own force. Under these circumstances, the suggestion that ours might be the finest police in the world feels pitifully anachronistic, if not wholly offensive.

It is, you could argue, a barren time to be British if you consider how few of our institutions, from the police to the monarchy and the judiciary, have managed to retain the level of respect once automatically accorded them by the public. It's even the case that those few individuals upon whom we confer the responsibility of national honour seem to have let us down.

During the World Cup, both England and Scotland had high hopes. The latter of qualifying past the first round, the former of revisiting the glory of 1966. Neither team came close to fulfilling those ambitions. Britain expected better but this depressing outcome only seems to confirm the further humbling of a former great power from mighty empire to international underdog. Yet within the England camp there was one player who offered a model of heroism that suggests Britain's future need not be one of perpetual mourning for its bygone status.

On returning from France, Tony Adams published Addiction, a biography that substituted the usual players' boasting about matches won and women wooed for an unstintingly frank account of his alcoholism. Here was a man who had done his best all his life and been duly rewarded with the captaincy of Arsenal and a permanent place in the England team. Yet he was lonely and depressed and used drink to salve the pain of those emotions. The publishing of Addiction then, took a different form of bravery from that which Adams, the rock at the centre of the Arsenal and England defence, is commonly known. In its wake, Paul Gascoigne sought help for his own alcoholism, prompting tearful words of support from another former drinker: Paul Merson.

Before the footballer on the confessional couch becomes just another cliché, it's worth remembering that while we expect such players to uphold national honour on the pitch we know little of their inner selves. By bringing the acutely personal into the public arena, Adams suggests that the two are indivisible.

Paul Condon would do well to take a leaf out of Tony Adams's book.

It seems to me that a wider lesson can be drawn from this. If Britain can no longer have whole-hearted faith in its institutions this is hardly something to mourn. In fact, it's an opportunity to come to terms with the complexity of this country as it really is, not as we might simply like it to be. As the Stephen Lawrence case shows, Britain is hardly the best place in the world to live.

Yet it would be a better country if it learnt ways to acknowledge and address its faults rather than ignore them. Paul Condon would do well to take a leaf out of Tony Adams's book.

Ekow Eshun is edior of Arena maagazine

We need a permanent movement to enforce our rights against Lord Irvine, particularly the right to trial by jury

Civil rights now, please

Michael Mansfield QC

THIS week ought to be a time for celebration and anticipation of a fairer and more just society, as we officially incorporate for the first time the European Convention on Human Rights into domestic law via the Human Rights Act.

Ironically, however, there is now an even greater need than ever before for concerted action to protect rights and ensure their enforcement in a meaningful way for ordinary people. Nothing short of a national civil rights movement can provide the impetus to translate words into practice.

In the US, Martin Luther King had to lead such a movement in order to achieve recognition for basic rights. Now, however, the struggle has moved from the stage of establishing rights to enforcing them.

The predicament is best illustrated, as it was in the US, by the plight of the black population, although it is by no means limited to them. Until Nelson Mandela entered the arena in May 1993, in support of the family of the murdered Stephen Lawrence, it is doubtful whether public debate of the kind engendered currently would have occurred. Instead of lurching from one case to another, from the Notting Hill disturbances to the Deptford fire, to the Bradford 12, to the deaths of Cherry Groce and Cynthia Jarrett, there is clearly now a need for a permanent movement to provide a sense of purpose, identity, solidarity and resources for those seeking both the truth and effective remedies.

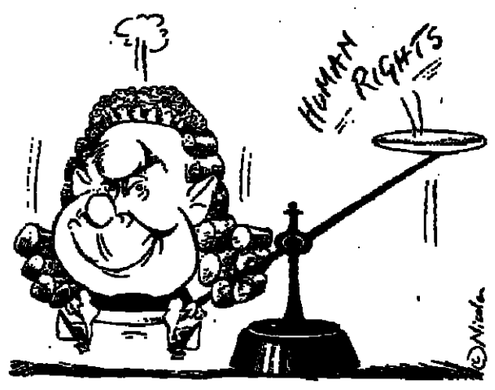
Yet the black communities are not alone in feeling isolated. Many others can echo their feelings of injustice — Hillsborough, Lockerbie, Irish families during the 70s and 80s, environmental activists, animal rights protestors, poll-tax objectors.

There is an interesting example in the field of fundamental rights presently being peddled by Lord Irvine, the Lord Chancellor, and others. It is the proposal to abolish the right to choose jury trial for offences (which include dishonesty), representing between 20 to 30 per cent of all cases in the crown court. Although the Runciman Commission mooted this, they also conceded that the overwhelming results of all research demonstrated that the public preferred jury trial because they regarded it as fairer. Furthermore, the roots of jury trial dating back to Magna Carta, and landmark trials of William Penn, Ponting and Randle & Pottle, demonstrate not only the essentially democratic element but also the conscientious approach.

Black communities are not alone in feeling isolated. Many feel injustice

As EP Thompson eloquently expressed it: "The English common law rests upon a bargain between the law and the people. The jury box is where the people come into the court; the judge watches them and the jury watches back. A jury is the place where the bargain is struck. A jury attends in judgment not only upon the accused but also upon the justice and humanity of the law."

Jack Straw, in opposition, said the plan was "unfair, short-sighted and likely to prove ineffective", and the then shadow Attorney General, John Morris, proclaimed that "the right to jury must be kept — it is cardinal". Barely one year later — volte face. The human rights commissions initially promised by the Government have now slid off the drawing board. These were desirable in order to vet previous legislation passed by the Tories — for example, the abolition to the right of silence, public order provisions limiting demonstrations and processions — and to vet proposed legislation to ensure that it conforms with the convention. It was also desirable to provide education, materials, and training on the impact of the convention.



As Heather Hallett, chair of the Bar, rightly commented: it is irony indeed if many of the first cases to be brought are ones challenging the legality of the Government's own legislative programme — the restriction of jury trials, the terrorism bill and anti-drug-trafficking measures.

The simple truth is that we still have a Government that despite all its high-sounding words speaks in one direction and looks in the other, a Government willing to incorporate rights into law, yet one that still frustrates every attempt to implement them effectively. They must be moved.

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'A sergeant decided to offer Lady Butler-Sloss an improvement course'
P L Jones, Letters

Battling for Britain

Blair fights SNP claims

NO MATTER that he was born there, Tony Blair can hardly look forward to visiting Scotland. Every time he heads north, he seems to run into trouble. During last year's election campaign he raised hackles when he compared a future Scottish parliament to a "parish council". Later, he stumbled when he was overheard lambasting the Scottish press corps as a bunch of "unreconstructed wankers". So few would blame the PM if his heart failed to leap as he pulled into Strathclyde University last night, there to deliver what was billed as a "keynote speech".

Such addresses are usually saved for party conferences or election campaigns — and the use of the word is telling. For Mr Blair was in Scotland less as Prime Minister than as leader of the Labour Party, in town to do partisan battle. The enemy is the Scottish National Party, which threatens to give Labour a severe bloody nose in next May's elections for the new parliament. For six months of this year the SNP led Labour in the polls; now they are slightly behind. As long as they stay neck-and-neck, the SNP stands a genuine chance of depriving Mr Blair's party of overall control. It is no longer science fiction to imagine Alex Salmond, and not Donald Dewar, as the first First Minister of Scotland.

The "unreconstructed" reading of Mr Blair's trip, then, is as a mission designed to calm the natives. The locals are getting restless — all William Wallace and facepaint — and the Prime Minister had to impose some order. But there's more to it than that. Labour has discovered that its completion of what John Smith called the "unfinished business" of devolution has unleashed a new and unpredictable dynamic. With the parliament about to be born, those Scots who feel a *cultural* separateness from England — rather than the mere urge for greater decentralisation — have moved on to the next demand: separatism. The debate has ratcheted up. No longer will mere autonomy within Britain be good enough; now a substantial number of Scots want to break away altogether.

This has presented Tony Blair and his party with a huge challenge. Throughout the 1980s, Labour was the obvious champion of Scotland, fighting to wrest power from the England-centric Tories. But now Labour is seen, unavoidably, as the party of the British government, issuing orders from faraway Whitehall. Many of Labour's leaders may speak in a Scottish accent, but the SNP has made headway casting Gordon Brown, Robin Cook, Alastair Darling and Donald Dewar as the Men from London.

The result is a new burden on Labour. It now falls to the Government to perform a function previously reserved for the Conservatives: it must make the case for the Union. Tony Blair encapsulated the argument as "better off together, worse off apart; stronger together, weaker apart". The intellectual ground was laid by the Chancellor in a series of thoughtful articles in the Scotsman (and one in yesterday's Guardian). There Mr Brown argued forcefully that the SNP was bent on making Scots foreigners within Britain and that it would cost the country dear by building economic barriers between Scotland and the rest of the UK. The Chancellor charged that the contest between Labour and the SNP was now one of social justice versus ethnic identity.

If that's so, Labour has to fend off the SNP's claim that it is well to the left of the Government on social issues — and therefore the real party of social justice — and its equal insistence that it represents anyone who lives in Scotland, and is a party of civic, not "ethnic" nationalism.

Above all, Labour has to make a firm, irrefutable case for the construct known as Britain. In these fluid times, that's a tall order.

Singeing Saddam

But first - why are we doing it?

THE DRUMROLL of battle is building in the Gulf. Once again, an armada of American aircraft is preparing its bombs, with the British playing a loyal junior role. Just as in the crisis over Kosovo a month ago the calibrated escalation of hardware is matched with a ratcheting up of the rhetoric. The Western media are expected to join the chorus of psychological warfare, at least by giving ample coverage to the preparations and, where possible, editorial support to the operation.

But there are differences from the Kosovo climax. There is no negotiating process underway with Iraq, for which the military threat could provide muscular back-up. Nor is the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, a man who is as susceptible to reason as the Yugoslav President. For all his cunning and prevarication Slobodan Milosevic understands the balance of forces and has always drawn back from the brink. Saddam, by contrast, is a man of ruthlessness and desperation who cares little for most of his people.

The prospect, therefore, is that he will not back down in the face of the looming threat of overwhelming force. This means that those — in Washington and elsewhere — who advocate it have a momentous responsibility to be sure they know why they are about to use it. Is it punitive, and if so does the punishment really match the crime? Are cruise missiles and smart bombs not an excessive retaliation for the offence of defying United Nations inspectors? Are those who pick the targets sure they will be putting the right people to death, and not innocent civilians?

If the aim is more than punitive, what is the political strategy behind it? Are the United States and Britain trying to hit Saddam and his close allies, the headquarters of the Revolutionary Guards, the command and control bunkers of his army command, and his presidential palaces in the hope that enough disaffection is caused for dissidents to take over? Regrettably, the record of the dissidents is not impressive and Saddam has already murdered many of them. Is the aim to cause so much chaos in Iraq that the Ba'ath party's regional enemies, the Shias in the south and the Kurds in the north, can provoke a general uprising which changes the regime in Baghdad?

These questions may have convincing answers but we need to hear them. Independently of the Americans, Robin Cook and George Robertson should tell us what they are.

Roy's sending off

The boot for missing le but

THE GAME between Arsenal and Chelsea in the Worthington Cup the other night was billed as a London derby. Say again? Stamford Bridge is a Babel and as for Highbury the coach is Irish, the manager French, the striker Dutch and so on down the team sheet. Misgivings we might have about a certain American citizen becoming a Premiership owner but the internationalisation of English football must be counted the best thing that has happened to the game since young Jimmy Hill secured the abolition of player serfdom in the early sixties.

In theory the occupation of top slots by foreign players might become a disincentive to the emergence of home-born talent, except that internationalisation cuts two ways and good English footballers are not likely to be overlooked in the rest of Europe, especially now the German and French leagues are themselves opening up in colour, language and nationality. In a game where talent shows early, the fact Premiership sides are cosmopolitan won't affect players in their critical years.

The fate of Roy Evans at Liverpool is a sad one. He has been a loyal servant of a great club and his going puts paid to its proud, Shankly tradition of longevity in the dug-out; the "double-header" with Gérard Houllier has been personally humiliating. The Liverpool board has given the impression it believes foreign managers make magic. Ruud Gullit's far-from-immediate impact at St James's Park let alone Liverpool's structural problems ought to dispel that. But in the longer run the arrival of these French coaches must be deemed good news. They bring with them — witness Arsène Wenger — standards of education and culture hitherto unknown in club management and above all they import sports professionalism antithetical to the drunken amateurism still evident in certain quarters, and not just in Middlesborough's front line. French managers, like Italian, Dutch and German are trained, examined and middle class. And that, like it or not, is football's future.

Letters to the Editor

Al Fayed fails to fly the flag

C E Montague's great-grandson, Simon Montague, writes (Letters, November 11) suggesting one consequence of the Great War was a loss of public trust in newspaper journalists. Simon Montague does not mention that his great-grandfather was appointed censor to all five Official War Correspondents on the Western Front.
David Lewis.
Macclesfield, Cheshire.

LORD Hunt would have baulked at the verb in your headline Careful planner who conquered Everest (November 9). He was wise enough to know that a mountain might be climbed, but never conquered.
Prof Roderick A Smith.
University of Sheffield.

IF George Forth can translate from Finnish "without any problems" (Letters, November 12) he should apply for a job in one of the European institutions forthwith.
Henry Wickens.
Waldbillig, Luxembourg.

WHITE vans are old hat (Letters, November 12). Street cyclists know it's red Parcel Force vans now.
James Hogan.
London.

SO Mohamed Al Fayed's web site is encouraging people to support his campaign for a UK passport (Wheen's world, November 11). Strange then its URL domain is the stateless *.com* rather than a flag-flying *.co.uk*.
Peter Ogborn.
Bournemouth.

WITH Tom and Prue both going, it seems that we must add Borsetshire to the growing list of places suffering rapid deforestation.
Simon Rake.
Totnes, Devon.

They can also serve . . .

WHY DO these men lament the absence of a call to arms in their day? (Oh, for a lovely war, G2, November 10). Is it because they yearn for a time when enemies and issues were clearly defined and their role in the fight against them was controlled by others? The men quoted all seem obsessed that their generation has only trivial issues to occupy them and that theirs is "an era that history will quickly forget".

History is likely to remember their era as a time when institutionalised injustice and global inequality went largely unchallenged. To claim that we lack the perspective war would provide us with is a nonsense in this age of mass information and easy travel.
Sean Flood.
London.

I'M writing this on Armistice Day to say that the possibility implied by your article horrified me: that we might drift into war because some bored, articulate people whinge "we've never been tested". The idea of service does not necessarily imply service in war. In other words, there are plenty of ways you can serve your community without raising the spectre of a country defined by war.

Here's just one idea for Jeremy Paxman and others . . . I am chair of governors at a state school which is desperately in need of other governors who are passionate about the rights of children.
Lynda Jinnis.
Bedford.

THE tragedy of our time is not that we lack the inferno of a war in which to prove ourselves (God forbid) but that we don't have the courage to win the peace, or make the relatively small sacrifices necessary to build a better society.

Of course it's a selfish, solipsistic society today. We've abandoned the great ideals of full employment, redistribution of wealth, the welfare state and service to the community. And we don't have to die for them (as some of our parents did in the second world war). All we have to do is to pay more taxes.

Since we have steadfastly refused to do this for some years now, we get the politicians we deserve and we paper our consciences with such sad, self-pampering phenomena as counselling and dietary preoccupations, to name but two.

It's all deeply depressing, but definitely not worth going to war about.
L G Clark.
Cornwall.

PERHAPS Robert Harris, Andrew Roberts and Jeremy Paxman have shares in armament companies? If they are so eager to involve themselves in mass slaughter, there are plenty of bloody conflicts round the world to which they can take themselves off for a course of self-improvement.
Mike Hennessey.
Durchhausen, Germany.

JEREMY Paxman says he doesn't have an answer to the purpose of life. I thought it was a case of "out of the unknown we came, into the unknown we go, and we're here because we're here because we're here".

Aristotle, Homer, Freud or was it the immortal Spike? I think we should be told.
Eric Turner.
Norwich, Norfolk.



The press, privacy and the PCC

LORD Wakeham of the Press Complaints Commission (Letters, November 12) argues that privacy laws would "gag the press" and its investigative powers and suggests that the "thousands" he says now complain to the PCC every year would not be able to "afford" working through the law.

First, each of the 50 US states has privacy laws and no one has ever suggested investigative journalism at any level is gagged (eg Watergate and Lewinsky). Second, "thousands" do not complain to the PCC, let alone about privacy, as Wakeham claims. His commission's own figures show that for the six months to September 1998, the total number of complaints received for all code violations was 1,105. Of these 805 — over 70 per cent — were disallowed by the PCC and not investigated.

There is no breakdown of these complaints. However, the PCC's annual review for 1997 shows that 1,510 complaints were investigated in 1997 and of these 13 per cent — about 200 — related to privacy.
Bob Borzello.
London.

Boot camps are not the way to help traumatised children

DR BOB Grove's account of his work with damaged adolescents at Peper Harow (The seeds of despair, Society, November 11) goes right to the heart of the problems currently highlighted in the case of Michael Stone (and many others like him), and in the call by MPs for an inquiry into the running of the new secure training centre for 12 to 14-year-olds in Medway.

We will never prevent damaged children becoming dangerous, anti-social adults until we learn to condemn a little less, and understand a little more. The kind of containment needed by deeply traumatised young children who have already entered the spiral of decline cannot be provided by locks and keys, or by staff in uniform (however casual) who are compelled to work in a culture based on the American-style boot camp.

There is little point in the private companies which run the centres paying lip-service to the need for therapeutic treatment by simply parachuting in a few psychologists on a sessional basis, when what is required is for the therapeutic approach to dominate the entire ethos of the place.
Michael Howlett.
Director, The Zito Trust.

THERE are many children — far more than we care to see — whose minds are tormented by what has happened to them. These children need sustained support and understanding, not punishment. They are not always lovable, but they are treatable — given the skills, and the knowledge of well-trained staff and the friendship and loyalty of their peers. What is now needed is the political will to undertake a major investment in children's mental health services, both in the community and in residential therapeutic establishments.
Peter Wilson.
Director, Young Minds.

Father's role in bringing up baby

LOUISA Young (Cute but dangerous, G2, November 11) describes well the isolation that many fathers experience if the mother is unable to share the joy and responsibility of the new baby.

But the article underestimates the task of reorientating the services of health visitors towards working with both parents. Most fathers never see a health visitor, since they are at work when the health visitor comes. Health visitors are trained to provide services to mothers, not to fathers. Even in the scheme introduced in your article, aimed to help both parents, the first step is a questionnaire for mothers only.

This suggests to fathers, like most other post-natal family services, that the role of the father is supplementary at most. In a recent survey of its 5,000 male members, the National Childbirth Trust found that over 90 per cent of respondents considered that the role of the father is ignored by family services and by society as a whole.

Your article claims fathers do not want counselling. This is not a reflection on fathers, but on the poor way in which family services are marketed to and provided for men.
Duncan Fisher.
NCT spokesperson on Fathers.
Adrienne Burgess.
Author, Fatherhood Reclaimed.

Please include a full postal address, even on e-mailed letters, and a daytime telephone number. We may edit letters: shorter ones are more likely to appear. Please provide a reference to the relevant article.

Judge not

YOUR story (Anger over car crash judge, November 12) gave the impression that Lady Justice Butler-Sloss was offered the soft option after being involved in a car carsh. This could not be further from the truth.

The driver improvement course is designed to improve motorists' skills and to reduce the carnage on our roads. It does not mean that a driver is not further punished with a fine and penalty points. The scheme also aims to reduce the number of people going to court for relatively minor offences. In Hampshire since April, 882 motorists have been given the option of a course. Anyone who does not complete the course satisfactorily still has to appear in court.

In the case of Lady Justice Butler-Sloss, a sergeant made the decision to offer her the improvement course. In accordance with our policy, that decision was submitted to me.

Surely it would have been an injustice to deal with Lady Butler-Sloss in a way that is not different to other drivers?
P L Jones.
Assistant Chief Constable.
Hampshire Constabulary.

Rupert laid bare

Bel Littlejohn

I GET back in after a heavy day investigating the past wrong-doings of the jaundiced far-right enemies of this great newspaper of ours and what do I see? Right first time. I see a pile of dirty pans and dishes this high by the kitchen sink. "Just what I don't need," I think. I sigh. And then I sigh some more.

So my bloke arrives downstairs, all innocence. I don't even bother to look up. He's not worth it, I say to myself. There's a pause. "Anything wrong?" he says. I sigh. "I said, anything wrong?" he says again.

He obviously hasn't heard the sigh, so I sigh one helluva lot more. "Only *that*," I say, nodding my head in the direction of the kitchen sink.

"Huh," he says, looking at the mess. "Bloody Murdoch. Typical bloody Murdoch!"

"Murdoch?" I say.

"Typical!" he says.

"You're saying Rupert Murdoch didn't do the washing up?" I say.

"Well are you saying he *did*?"

"No, of course I'm not. Rupert Murdoch never does our washing up."

"There you are! Bloody Murdoch. Typical bloody Murdoch."

And when you think about it, he's right, you know, even if at first glance it's hard to prove. Because statistics show that Rupert Murdoch is now the most influential man in Britain, bar none. And — call me foolish or call me an outstandingly brave campaigning columnist whose trouble is she cares too much — I'm sorry, but I for one am not prepared to sit back and let him get away with it.

Murdoch's pernicious influence seeps into the very hoof and web of British public life. It says all you ever wanted to know about Murdoch that my latest book, Hug Me While I Weep For I Weep for The World: The Lonely Struggles of Bel Littlejohn (Little Brown, £9.99), continues to be denied serialisation in the Sun or even in the Times Literary Supplement. It doesn't take a genius too see the heavy hand of Rupert Murdoch esq behind that cowardly decision.

And it doesn't end there. I've been told by someone very, very close to the royal household that the Queen is now under exclusive contract to BSkyB (owned by — yup — you've got it — Mr Rupert Murdoch) and that she has secretly promised her new paymaster that she'll be able to deliver the State Opening of Parliament, the Queen's Christmas Broadcast and the Royal Tournament to him by January 1, 2001, with a Kensington Palace Live channel hosted by Princess Michael of Kent ready for 24-hour transmission by the spring of 2005.

> I've been told the Queen is now under exclusive contract to BSkyB

My bloke, bless him, is a professional Murdoch-monitor — and a regular correspondent to Guardian Letters on the topic. He confirms that he's been told by someone on the inside that Murdoch is now able to dictate worldwide fashion trends. Take cashmere, for instance. There's a lot of it about. *Fact*: In the film of the Titanic, Kate Winslet was briefly seen wearing a cashmere cardigan. *Fact*: In the Sunday Times last week two full pages were given over to cashmere. *Fact*: Cherie Blair is regularly seen on the steps of Number 10 in a light blue cashmere cardigan. And *fact*: Whaddya know? — Top people's store Harrods has a special cashmere sale now on.

Four unrelated facts? Come off it. Who owns Warner Bros, the company which made Titanic? Who owns the Sunday Times? Whose TV company contributed £10m to the Millennium Dome, the pet project of Cherie's husband? And who, famously, owns Harrods? The answer to all these four questions is, of course, Mr Rupert Murdoch. And guess who's bought up 95 per cent of the cashmere produced worldwide, or so my bloke's contact has heard? You got it: Murdoch. Hot tip: expect to see the Queen wearing cashmere in public within the next two weeks, and Peter M announcing a new Cashmere Zone in the Dome, full of futuristic robots wearing one-piece cashmere posing pouches.

It's been a typical Murdoch week. My cat is moulting (memo to self: check Murdoch still owns Whiskas), it poured with rain thanks to Murdoch's high-handed attitude to the ozone layer, and my bloke is furious because his last letter to The Guardian ("Has anyone noticed that if you add a 'g', Rupert Murdoch is almost an anagram for Right Prat cdeu?") wasn't printed, which he blames on last-minute leaning on the Scott Trust by you-know-who. Ah well. Let's hope he doesn't destroy the weekend too. 'Nuff said.

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Clouds lift at Silicon Glen, page 15

Tomorrow: Dr Pepper sniffs victory

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Finance Guardian

BT reaches for Sky deal

Chris Barrie, Media Business Correspondent

BRITISH Telecom is pushing the Government for a relaxation of its regulatory framework so that it can tie up a major marketing deal with Rupert Murdoch's British Sky Broadcasting and position itself as the country's premium mobile phone operator for the future.

BT directors have made it clear privately that they are keen to forge closer links with the satellite broadcaster as a way of fighting off competition from cable companies that offer cheap telephony bundled with pay-television services.

A deal to market Sky's digital TV services would also benefit British Interactive Broadcasting, the interactive TV service recently renamed Open and jointly owned by BT, BSkyB, Midland Bank and Matsushita.

BSkyB, for its part, would gain access to BT's enormous customer base, helping it break into households that have so far shunned pay-TV.

Similarly, BT indicated yesterday that it wants the Government to relax the restriction that prevents it from owning all of the mobile phone operator Cellnet. Securicor owns a 40 per cent stake. BT wants to bid for a licence to operate the new generation of mobile devices — the UMTS licence — which will combine voice, TV and multi-media services on handheld sets. The group will argue that the convergence of these technologies make regulations of the past no longer relevent.

Sir Peter Bonfield, chief executive, said new competition legislation gave the Government fresh powers to regulate the market. The consumer should be able to choose what to buy.

The remarks came as BT unveiled a 12 per cent hike in second-quarter operating profits to £913 million on £4.4 billion turnover. Pre-tax profits tripled to £1.9 billion, but were inflated by the £1.1 billion from the sale of BT's stake in US phone company MCI.

Shareholders will receive an inflation-busting 7.3 per cent rise in the dividend of 8.1p a share, costing £523 million. However, Sir Peter said BT would not use its cash to pay more money to shareholders through share buybacks over the next six months, although the board remained "open-minded".

The scale of the group's profits brought criticism from the Consumers Association. Mark Purdy, principal policy researcher, said BT's profits were increasing while charges were still higher than competitors'.

Noting that Ionica, a wireless telephone operator, had recently gone into liquidation, Mr Purdy said most customers had just two companies — BT or a cable firm — to choose from. A duopoly was developing, not healthy competition.

Despite pushing into Europe and Asia-Pacific, BT still depends on the UK market for 90 per cent of revenue. BT carried 6 per cent more calls, but falling prices cut the impact, so that turnover from inland calls rose 2 per cent to £2.54 billion.

Turnover from mobiles, including Cellnet, rose 21 per cent to £639 million.

BT lost 65,000 residential lines to competition in the half-year, against 230,000 in the same period in 1997. BT said its loss of residential lines had slowed as customers chose to have a second line.

Denying that competition was fading, Sir Peter said increases in mobile, second lines and overseas ventures were offsetting competitive pressure. The joint venture with AT&T was on course.

BT is feeling the effect of a slow-down in the economy, a factor visible in the 7.4 per cent drop in international call turnover to £373 million. The group is investing £1 billion upgrading its network for the growth in data and Internet business. Sales and services division increased turnover by 37 per cent to £812 million.

Notebook

Big clean-up is needed right across the board



Lisa Buckingham

ANEWS blackout descended on the Marks & Spencer succession story yesterday morning, only days after Sir Richard Greenbury — the man whose job is at the centre of the very public spat — cut short a trip to India to fly back to Baker Street and reinstate a sense of discipline.

It is no surprise, of course, that a hands-on chairman and chief executive such as Sir Richard would want to influence a situation which had become an embarrassment to one of the most respected retail names in the country.

What is more worrying is that non-executive directors of the calibre of those on the M&S board were so clearly not up to the job.

Internal rivalries between contenders for the top slot are far from unusual. It is not uncommon for candidates to lobby the non-executives.

But a decent set of non-executives should manage to resolve such unedifying tussles while keeping them out of the public spotlight and limiting damage to the company's reputation.

M&S is not the only example of non-executive failure at present. Look at Booker, whose tattered reputation has just been razed by one of the most devastating profits warnings seen by the City.

Clearly it is in the interests of the new chief executive, Stuart Rose, to disclose all horrors before he starts. The scale would probably have been far less dramatic — indeed, Mr Rose might not have been *in situ* — had the non-executives at Booker been more on the ball and insisted that the rudderless ship was given a commander earlier in the day.

Unbelievably, the company had been allowed to drift without a chief executive since March, notwithstanding profits warnings, takeover approaches and market turmoil.

Similar criticisms of the failure to grasp an obvious nettle or to interpret properly outside disquiet could easily be levelled at the non-executive directors of other companies.

Just look at the way Lucas-Varity underestimated the opposition of small shareholders to its planned move away from Britain to the US.

An expectation of 20/20 vision is unrealistic. But non-executives are routinely paid £30,000 or £40,000 for little more than a handful of meetings a year.

The climate of corporate responsibility has been in place for some time and there has been the best part of a decade to digest Sir Adrian Cadbury's thinking on the role.

Until the present, investors have been reluctant to oppose the reappointment of non-executive directors on contentious issues such as excessive boardroom pay, quite possibly because these have not hit their wallets.

But the latest failures have contributed to a substantial deterioration in shareholder value. Those who have seen their wealth so diminished should consider retribution against those responsible, at the next annual meeting.

Rock of ages

A HANDFUL of new jobs, such as those created yesterday in Scotland's Silicon Glen, will go some way towards repairing the employment devastation caused by huge industrial retrenchment which is now taking place in the face of global economic slowdown.

Equally, companies such as Shell, which plans to sack another 3,000 employees, could minimise the wasteland they create by learning from the last great round of redundancies.

The drive to reduce costs and improve productivity — the mantra for late 20th century business — has meant not only substantial but also, more or less, unrelenting job losses.

However, even bigger savings have been achieved by ensuring that those who leave are older, usually expensive, employees rather than cheaper younger ones.

Superficially the economics seem unquestionable. And, after all, which company wants to appear to block the career paths of thrusting young Turks by leaving costly old crocks *in situ*?

— But plenty of firms which downsized so savagely in the last recession regretted scything middle and upper management. Sure, the workforce they retained was low-cost and youthful. But all too frequently it had not the vaguest idea of how or where to apply its energies. In many cases corporations were forced to re-hire their experienced oldies, often at higher freelance rates.

There are odd, quirky examples of companies that appear to appreciate the skills of older people — B&Q, the do-it-yourself chain, routinely hires over-50s, while some of the Disney toy stores have advertised for granny-style sales people. Most corporations, however, hardly deign to respond to job applications from those aged much over 40.

Something like one-third of the 9.5 million Britons aged between 50 and 65 are out of work. Many regard themselves as on the scrap heap. But, with the Government's code of good practice on ageism scheduled for publication any day and estimates emerging that ageism costs the country between £20 billion and £30 billion a year, it is to be hoped that employers will have learned the lesson of the last big jobs shake-out. First in, first out is a sure way to industrial extinction.

Boxes blow hits digital launch

Chris Barrie, Media Business Correspondent

NEW television broadcaster ONdigital admitted yesterday that its suppliers will be unable to make enough set-top decoder boxes to meet public demand in the crucial pre-Christmas sales period.

Although the terrestrial television company, jointly owned by ITV companies Granada and Carlton, will begin broadcasting officially from 4pm on Sunday, the firm expects to sell all available stock of the decoder boxes, which convert digital signals for use in standard analogue television sets.

ONdigital marketing director Jim Radcliffe said the company was ready for launch but acknowledged that the company's call centre had received 150,000 inquiries already. He admitted that the firm was unlikely to be able to meet demand.

Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB has launched its digital satellite service and the cable channels are due to enter the arena early next year.

ONdigital has "tens of thousands" of the boxes ready for delivery but Philips is the only company making them — at a rate of 2,500 to 3,000 a day. Pace, a rival manufacturer, is due to start production towards the end of the year with 1,000 units a day. Other manufacturers are due to come on stream next year.



Louise (Carol Harrison) and Tiffany (Martine McCutcheon) in EastEnders, part of ON digital's launch line-up on Sunday PHOTOGRAPH: BRIAN RITCHIE

ONdigital is attempting to orchestrate the 4,000 retailers selling the equipment and the broadcaster's pay-TV services so that the stock is directed to where demand is greatest.

ONdigital is launching with 30 channels, including the BBC and commercial free-to-air services, and next year will introduce pay-per-view channels, e-mail and interactive services. The company has trained 5,000 retail staff and is providing information about which areas can receive its programmes.

Stephen Grabiner, chief executive, brushed aside research purporting to show that only 43 per cent of the population can receive all 30 ONdigital channels. Mr Grabiner said 70 per cent of the country would receive a full service, rising to 90 per cent by the end of next year.

But the patchy nature of the digital coverage is highlighted by ONdigital's practice of providing retailers with five books detailing by postcode the areas which receive a full, partial or no service. The books list at least eight levels of coverage.

Mr Grabiner emphasised that, unlike the offer from BSkyB, there would be no obligation on customers to link their telephones to the new service — although the e-mail and interactive services will be effective only with a telecoms link of some kind.

A TV, press and poster advertising campaign is under way, costing £10 million between now and Christmas and £90 million over the next 12 months.

The company said it might have space for up to another eight channels on its multiplexes — depending on technology — and plans to broadcast MTV within six months, and Nickelodeon and the Paramount Comedy Channel within the next year.

Zeneca to sell its speciality chemical firms

Lisa Buckingham City Editor

DRUGS group, Zeneca, yesterday put its large speciality chemicals operations up for sale in a move which could boost its acquisitions war chest by more than £1.5 billion.

It is attempting to cash in on the global consolidation sweeping the field of speciality chemicals. Analysts last night predicted an auction between major players from the US and Germany. There was even speculation that ICI, from which Zeneca was divested in 1993, might bid.

Earlier this week, BP announced plans to invest £500 million in its chemicals business and two Swiss companies, Ciba Speciality Chemicals and Clariant, announced a £3.67 billion merger.

Zeneca shares rose by 28p to 2298p as Jeremy Scudamore, chief executive of Zeneca Specialities, said he was confident of attracting a top quality buyer.

JP Morgan, the American investment bank, will handle the disposal which Mr Scudamore reckons will take several months. But he stressed his determination to keep the process as tight as possible to minimise uncertainty for the 5,500 employees in the worldwide operation.

Zeneca will retain Marlow Foods, which makes the meat substitute Quorn, but will divest Biocides, Industrial Colours, LifeScience Molecules, Performance & Intermediate Chemicals, Resins and Stahl leather products.

Mr Scudamore said there had been no firm approaches for the business although clearly Zeneca has received expressions of interest.

The move was applauded in the City although some analysts regarded it as overdue and did not think the divestment would make Zeneca any more attractive as a takeover target.

James Culverwell of Merrill Lynch commented: "This is a very positive development. There was little synergy between speciality chemicals and pharmaceuticals so it is good to see them moving in this direction. It will create a better, cleaner business."

Speciality chemicals, including Marlow Foods, had sales, of £585 million out of the group total of £5.2 billion last year.

Zeneca wants any buyer to be committed to investing in the business and take on its employees.

The drugs group carries only modest debts so it is not raising money because it is cash-strapped. The market expects the proceeds to be invested in mainstream pharmaceuticals and biotechnology acquisitions.

Ladbroke backs winners and losers

Julia Finch

LADBROKE raked in £6 million profit from bets placed by football fans during the World Cup — but has written off its entire £9 million investment in its Easy Play football lottery game three months after its launch.

The scale of the boost provided by the World Cup was revealed by the group yesterday in a trading update, which helped the shares climb 6.5p to 231p.

The one-off £6 million profit was generated from £34 million of bets placed in the final two weeks of the month-long tournament — the first fortnight fell outside the period covered by the trading statement. But a Ladbroke spokesman said the whole betting and gaming division had performed strongly, with the slot machines in the shops increasing takings and a good performance from the key racing division.

Ladbroke's venture into the lottery business, however, has fallen short of expectations. Easy Play, which is marketed by Ladbroke subsidiary Vernons, was expected to cash in on football euphoria generated by the World Cup and the start of the new season. Research indicated it would pull in millions of players a week paying £1-a-go. But recent figures show just 300,000 people are playing the game, despite a relaunch TV advertising campaign. Last month senior sources within the company said Ladbroke was ready to axe the entire venture, which runs on Camelot's 24,000 National Lottery terminals, rather than continue supporting the loss-making game.

The good performance at the betting and gaming division eclipsed details of the "difficult trading conditions" facing Ladbroke's Hilton hotels offshoot. The group, which is scaling back its overseas expansion plans, said its Egyptian business was still affected by last year's Luxor tourist massacre.

Ladbroke is expected to finalise a shortlist of potential buyers for the Coral bookmaking chain this weekend. The group has been forced to part with the business, which it bought from Bass at the turn of this year for £363 million, after Trade Secretary Peter Mandelson ruled the acquisition was against the public interest.

Bidders on the shortlist are expected to include rival bookmaking groups Stanley Leisure and the Tote, along with several venture capital groups. Ladbroke has been given until March 23 next year to complete the sale.



'Steady Eddie' takes a trip into cyberspace

GOVERNOR of the Bank of England Eddie George, left, went into cyberspace yesterday and in an online chat answered questions about the Bank's attitude to European monetary union, the state of the economy — and his nickname.

During the hour-long session John Moore of Caterham, Surrey, asked when the Governor would realise that interest rate policy had "destroyed the economy". "The economy has been growing at 3 per cent for the last five years and unemployment is at its lowest for 18 years — that is not a destroyed economy," he replied. Another wanted to know what the Governor thinks of his nickname "Steady Eddie". "Its a compliment," said Mr George.

The Governor hinted that he was relieved not to be one of the central bank chiefs taking his country into the euro next year. Asked whether others were envious of Britain for not being in the first wave, he said: "I think there are some feelings of that kind." An advantage of being out was that Britain could focus on preparing for the year 2000 IT problem.

PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL HACKETT

Lonrho Africa war escalates

Laurie Laird

THE battle for control of Lonrho Africa escalated yesterday, with minority shareholder Blakeney Management scheduling an extraordinary general meeting on December 10 to gain shareholder approval for a change in the board.

Investment fund Blakeney, in which the Soros funds hold a 13 per cent stake, and partner African Lakes hold just over 10 per cent of Lonrho Africa, demerged from its parent last May. Blakeney chiefs feel Lonrho management has not provided much value for its shareholders. The shares were unchanged at 64½p yesterday, but fell to 42p in September, after floating at 85p in May.

But Lonrho Africa — whose operations stretch from pig farms to car dealerships — wants nothing to do with Blakeney, particularly chairman Miles Morland, who seeks a seat on the board. Lonrho accuses the Blakeney team of launching a back-door takeover without offering any premium to shareholders.

Bernard Asher, Lonrho Africa chairman, believes Mr Morland has been less-than straightforward about his intentions which are to break up the group, leading to significant layoffs among the 27,000 employees. Mr Asher and his colleagues have also indicated that some accounts at African Lakes do not comply with accepted standards.

Analysts agree that Lonrho Africa is undervalued.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.529	Germany 2.721	Malaysia 6.29	Singapore 2.68
Austria 19.03	Greece 453.66	Malta 0.605	South Africa 9.108
Belgium 56.00	Hong Kong 12.44	Netherlands 3.056	Spain 230.14
Canada 2.493	India 70.24	New Zealand 2.998	Sweden 12.98
Cyprus 0.796	Ireland 1.082	Norway 12.13	Switzerland 2.246
Denmark 10.38	Israel 7.05	Portugal 274.26	Turkey 466,307
Finland 8.289	Italy 2,691	Saudi Arabia 6.035	USA 1.618
France			

Supplied by NatWest (excluding rupee, shekel and dollar)

After the closures . . .

Silicon Glen turns positive



A £15 million shaft of light from the east penetrates the employment clouds hanging over Silicon Glen PHOTOGRAPH: MURDO MacLEOD

Janice Warman

SCOTLAND'S Silicon Glen received a boost yesterday with the announcement of two projects which will bring 900 jobs to an area which has been hit by a series of closures.

Up to 700 jobs will be created in Irvine over the next two to three years by the Taiwanese electronics group Universal Scientific Industrial Company. USI will invest about £15 million at Riverside Business Park, where it has bought 27 acres of land for its first European factory, which will produce products for the computer, telecoms and automotive industries. The plant will also house a design, marketing and customer support centre.

The project was won for Scotland against fierce competition from Ireland.

In a further boost to employment prospects in the area, Murray International, the conglomerate owned by David Murray, chairman of Rangers Football Club, is to open a £1 million call centre today at Govan, once the centre of Britain's shipbuilding industry. Two hundred staff employed by Response Handling will field customer relations and marketing calls for BSkyB, Beck's Beer, Scottish Enterprise and Scottish Power.

Foreign-owned companies now have around 330 manufacturing plants in Scotland which between them employ nearly 82,000 people.

The news comes as a welcome contrast to the closure in September by the US computer components group Viasystems of two plants in Galashiels and Selkirk with the loss of 1,000 jobs. Closure of the plants removed £26 million from the local economy.

Locate in Scotland, the inward investment agency which negotiated the deal, is a joint operation between Scottish Enterprise and the Scottish Office. It has four offices in the Far East, in Taiwan, Japan, Korea and Singapore, with a staff of 11.

Its interim director, Kevin Clark, who is in charge of the Asia operation, said that in the next three to five years some 18,000 jobs would be created in Scotland thanks to the agency's work overseas.

Contact with companies such as USI began even before they considered their needs overseas, he said, so that by the time they were thinking of opening a factory in Europe they had been given extensive information about the strong supply of skilled labour in Scotland and the workforce's longstanding experience in the electronic industry.

There are more than 30 Japanese companies in Scotland, including NEC, Canon, Mitsubishi and Matsushita. Despite Japan's local economic difficulties, these companies were in Scotland to stay, Mr Clark said.

The US and Europe provide the bulk of new investment in Scotland, with the US providing 35-40 per cent of new investment and reinvestment, and Europe a similar number of projects each year.

Harvey Wu, vice-president of USI, said he had been attracted to Scotland for several reasons. "The wealth of high-quality electronics companies in Scotland and the UK provides us with scope for rapid growth, both in terms of potential customers and suppliers of components, and materials we require for our own activities."

The availability and quality of the Scottish work force and transport links into continental Europe from Prestwick airport were additional attractions, he said.

Scottish business and industry minister Lord Macdonald, who will open the Govan call centre tomorrow, said: "I am delighted that USI has chosen Scotland as the location for its new European factory and warmly welcome the hundreds of jobs it will create in Irvine. Investment of this magnitude is always good news, but particularly so at a time when many companies are feeling the effects of the current global economic downturn.

"Today's announcement is further proof, if any were needed, that Scotland is the place to do business."

Oil glut forces Shell into further job cuts

Union chiefs angered by 'frenzy of downsizing' at multinational

Dan Atkinson

CUT-THROAT competition on the garage forecourt and a huge oversupply of unwanted refined oil will mean an extra 3,000 job losses at the giant Royal Dutch-Shell energy group, it emerged yesterday. A large number are expected to be in Britain, with jobs also going in the Netherlands, France and Germany.

The axe is falling on 20 per cent of the workforce of Shell European Oil Products (SEOP), of which Shell UK is a part. Retailing, manufacturing and distribution will all be hit.

Unions were angry that news of the job losses leaked out, only because Shell was obliged to inform the Dutch works council. Plans to extend such councils to companies based in Britain are being opposed by the Government.

Roger Lyons, general secretary of the Manufacturing Science and Finance Union, said: "This is a panic measure by a multinational to the fall in the oil price. Shell are in a feeding frenzy of down-sizing across the board, regardless of the business needs."

Texaco also announced yesterday that it is to lose 250 jobs in Britain. They are in the exploration and production businesses in London, Aberdeen and off-shore in the North Sea. The cuts are the latest in what has been a jobs bloodbath in the hard-hit oil industry. In June, Shell said it was to close its refinery in [illegible] with the loss of 290 jobs, driving [illegible] contracted [illegible] posts.

Earlier this month, Amerada Hess, a big North Sea investor, said it was cutting 100 jobs, 10 per cent of its workforce, to try to counter collapsing oil prices. And, in August, British Petroleum and America's Amoco announced a merger that would slash 6,000 posts from a joint workforce of 99,000.

Yesterday's Shell job cuts include the 15 per cent of the SEOP workforce already announced. The losses form part of a package that will include Shell leaving its historic Shell Mex building on the Strand in London.

It is thought that, of the 3,000 job losses, 200 will be in Holland and 370 in Germany. Shell said the cuts would be made up of a mixture of job transfers, voluntary redundancies, natural wastage and compulsory redundancies.

The group denied that the cuts exercise was being driven entirely by sliding oil prices, although it admitted that ferocious competition for European petrol sales was a big factor, as was the large over-supply of refined oil. It said the changes were designed also to bring Shell "closer" to its customers.

Shell began looking at job cuts a year ago. Its review was prompted by criticism of the company's return on capital investment.

At the time, analysts estimated that the review could trim £433 million from the group's costs. Early this month, the group reported its results for the third quarter of the year, which showed profits down by 56 per cent.

Producers are forced to reduce rate of flow along global pipeline

WORLD oil prices are at their lowest in real terms since the Morris Minor was in production, *writes Dan Atkinson.*

The price of a barrel of Brent crude bounced by about a dollar yesterday, to $12.36, but that had more to do with looming air raids on Iraq than any underlying change in demand.

Mark Redway, analyst at broker T Hoare, said military action against President Saddam might lead to a "spike" in the price but the longer-term outlook remained "fairly gloomy".

There is too much oil around and the Asian crisis has shrunk global demand. The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) has had some success this year in getting members not to cheat on a package of production cuts and, without the Asian meltdown, these cuts would have bolstered the price.

As it is, the package has simply helped Opec to stand still as supertankers roam the high seas in search of someone to buy their cargoes.

The next Opec meeting, at the end of this month, will need to approve drastic cuts if it is to make any impact on prices. For those producing oil or holding large stocks, the only glimmer of hope is the possibility that American inventory figures are thought to be inaccurate and may overstate the extent to which oil is overhanging the market. Unfortunately, these figures are just as likely to be inaccurate in the opposite direction, meaning the overhang is larger than feared.



Call for rebirth of moribund MAI

Larry Elliott, Economics Editor

THE Government will try to relaunch the moribund talks on an international investment deal later this month when it invites trade unions and development agencies to help thrash out a fresh agenda for negotiations.

After a French boycott left the three-year wrangling over a Multilateral Agreement on investment in tatters, ministers have decided the way forward is to include labour standards and environment concerns from the outset.

Critics of the deal — who dubbed the original MAI blueprint a charter for multi-nationals — are being asked to come to talks with the trade minister, Brian Wilson, the environment minister, Michael Meacher, and George Foulkes, the Minister for International Development.

Mr Wilson said he hoped Britain could take the lead in reviving the idea of a worldwide agreement that would provide safeguards for investors and prevent discrimination against foreign firms.

But he added that it was time to "draw a line" under the old negotiations and start anew. "There was no future in trying to adapt the MAI agenda to accommodate the many concerns it attracted. It is better to start again with a clean sheet of paper".

The trade minister stressed that non-governmental organisations as well as the TUC and the CBI would be invited to the meeting on November 26, because it was vital that social concerns were built into the agenda.

"The principle of a treaty that safeguards and encourages investment is a sound one, but it must appear as an opportunity rather than as a threat," Mr Wilson said.

The Government believes that fresh negotiations should take place at the World Trade Organisation — which has 130 members from rich and poor countries — rather than at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, a club for 29 developed nations. "We have a long-standing goal of pursuing investment rules in the World Trade Organisation," Mr Wilson said.

"One of the lessons which has been learnt is the need to set clear objectives. Equally important, all discussions should be conducted as openly as possible, with all interested parties invited to put forward their views at every stage of the process."

Private finance plan to boost decaying housing stock

Larry Elliott

SOME of Britain's most run-down and poverty-stricken estates are being lined up as the next target for inclusion in the Government drive to use private finance for public spending projects.

Unveiling a second review of the Private Finance Initiative and the Public-Private Partnerships, Geoffrey Robinson, the Paymaster-General, said the Government wanted to explore the possibility of using outside capital to help local authorities upgrade Britain's housing stock.

The Treasury is planning a pilot private finance project on an estate in Berwick-upon-Tweed as part of its attempt to find new ways of increasing capital projects.

Mr Robinson said precise details of how councils could become partners in private finance deals were still being thought through, but added that the Government was keen to develop local authority projects.

"We have made great strides with PFI in the past year. But we must continue to identify and develop partnerships and opportunities with public and private sectors.

"I want to see such partnerships extended beyond PFI. We need to exploit all commercial potential and spare capacity in public sector assets through a sensible balance of risk and reward."

The first review of private finance under Sir Malcolm Bates proposed the creation of the Treasury Taskforce to help central government departments and agencies road-test projects. The taskforce's two-year life comes to an end in late summer 1999.

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NOTICE OF INTEREST RATE VARIATION

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Mortgages Direct Preferential Variable Rate
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Mortgages Direct Personal Choice™ Variable Rate
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News in brief

Shake-up for GRE business

GUARDIAN Royal Exchange is merging its life and health care businesses into a single operation in an effort to boost sales and reduce costs.

The move, focused around its PPP private health insurance subsidiary, is an attempt to boost the group's activities outside the hard-pressed general insurance market.

The PPPlifetime care unit will buy Guardian's life insurance business for £220 million. In return Guardian will inject £300 million into the operation. — *Lisa Buckingham*

PowerGen surge

A WET summer and supply problems from French and British nuclear plants helped PowerGen produce better than expected results. Pre-tax profits rose by 8 per cent to £166 million and earnings per share by 11 per cent. Sales were 7 per cent higher at £1.267 billion. The company will be on the acquisitions trail next year with a look at the US or a possible second purchase in Britain, following July's East Midlands takeover. — *Janice Warman*

Capital turns on to profits

CAPITAL Radio is looking for acquisitions and is lobbying the Government to lighten regulations in a new Broadcasting Act. The group, which turned in an 8 per cent rise in profits to £37.8 million on £117.2 million turnover, believes there must be consolidation if Britain is to compete in international markets. Capital's failed bid for Virgin Radio cost £963,000, paid to City advisers. The company has taken an exceptional charge of £953,000. — *Chris Barrie*

Japan plans £88bn boost

JAPAN'S ruling party yesterday outlined plans for the nation's biggest ever stimulus package in its latest attempt to jumpstart the world's second most powerful economy.

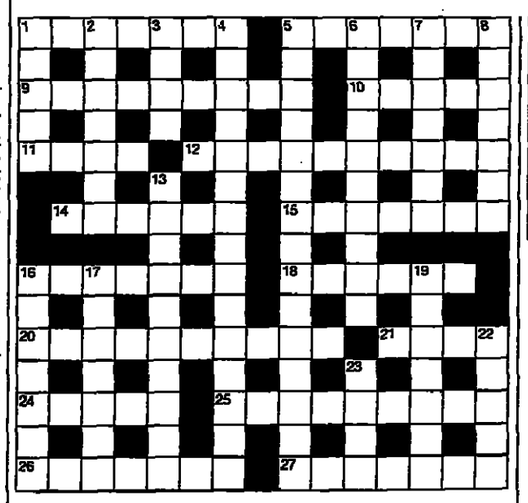
The Liberal Democratic Party said the 18 trillion yen (£88 billion) plan would create a million new jobs and help drag Japan out of recession. — *Jonathan Watts, Tokyo*

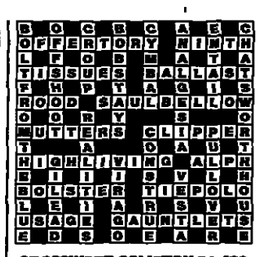
Dennis chief resigns

STEVE Burton, chief executive of Dennis Group, the engineers bought by Mayflower Corporation, has resigned and is to leave at the end of November. Brendan Geary, finance director and company secretary, will leave at the end of February, when the Dennis Group head office at Meriden will be closed.

Guardian Crossword No 21,431

Set by Plodge





CROSSWORD SOLUTION 21,430

Across

1 Draw level, talking posh? What sauce! (7)
5 Thorough physical exam with artist replacing setter (7)
9 Bill's occupation is riveting (9)
10 Singular expression for a bit of bread (5)
11 First (initial) offer already written! (4)
12 Cross off make-up man taking the foreign subject for 9? (10)
14 Time off with a couple of fifties? Chicken feed! (5)
15 Me? Blurt "Off to the guillotine!"? (7)
16 Ready money, say, for spaceship in Asia (7)
18 Model for the stars? Your first error, silly! (5)
20 Not the first job for late arrivals (6,4)
21 An aural virus was in the air (4)
24 Stir up squabbles, by the sound of it (5)
25 Former players, by the way, were drunk (9)
26 Of love they're free (7)
27 Certain coppers, indeed! (7)

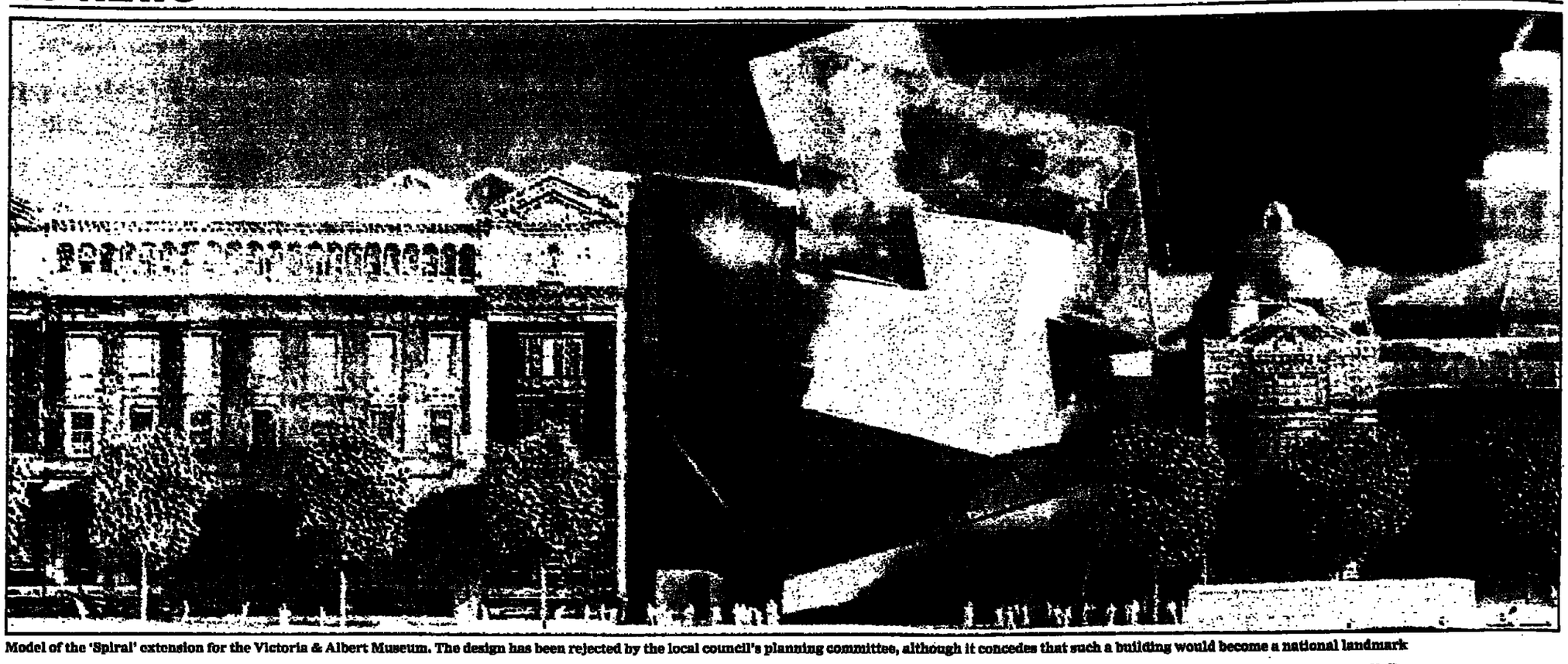
Down

1 Hue and cry for something to start a Fiesta, perhaps (5)
2 Inter-ministerial limits? (7)
3 Grass contains heroin? (4)
4 See 5 down
5,4 The Tressell novel shored up old painters' rights? Great! (6,9,15)
6 Doctor's ER medic admitted West Coast City Ranters (10)
7 Little Bighorn loser took Latin mass (7)
8 Broadminded house-party? (7)
13 Versailles negotiator Attlee cut off cold water abroad (10)
16 Bird-fancier Koestler had nothing to lose (7)
17 Caught with Latin in ascending transport? Give in! (7)
19 Player swapping ends revived . . . (7)
22 . . . United getting silver? You bet . . . (5)
23 . . . Bobby, centre-forward, nobbled the Italian back (4)

Solution tomorrow

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Model of the 'Spiral' extension for the Victoria & Albert Museum. The design has been rejected by the local council's planning committee, although it concedes that such a building would become a national landmark

V&A's extension spirals into a nosedive

Dan Glaister
Arts Correspondent

IT WAS hailed as a visionary piece of architecture, an innovative design the like of which had never been seen in Britain.

But yesterday the Victoria & Albert Museum's "Spiral" extension was dealt a blow when the the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's planning committee rejected Daniel Libeskind's £75 million white tile-clad design.

While a final decision is not due to be made by the council until Monday, it is unlikely that councillors will reject the recommendations of planning officers.

But there was some hope for the V&A in the conclusions of the planning committee. While rejecting the scheme on the grounds of its scale and its relation to the adjacent buildings, the planning committee acknowledged the overall quality of the design.

The proposal, say the planners, is "clearly unusual and innovative, of very high quality and design and if built would become a national landmark". But the message seems to be that while it is considered a design of great merit, it is not the sort of thing the Kensington and Chelsea planners would wish to see in their borough. The design, they say, would have great merit "in isolation".

The proposal, according to planners, would harm the character of the Queen's Gate conservation area. It is also higher than many of its neighbours, "competing with them and becoming over-dominant", gives the impression of "spilling out" into the street, and would intrude on the "quiet dignity" of the Pirelli Garden, the museum's only usable outdoor space.

The rejection came as no great surprise to supporters



Daniel Libeskind, the scheme's creator PHOTOGRAPH: BEN CURTIS

of the scheme, who now expect the proposal to be referred to the Secretary of State for the Environment, John Prescott. A costly and lengthy public inquiry is the most likely outcome.

Gwyn Miles, head of major projects at the V&A, was bullish about the extension's prospects. "We are disappointed but not downhearted," she said.

"The planners, while admitting that it's a building of great architectural quality, have rejected the plan. This is a building that has won the support of both English Heritage and the Royal Fine Arts Commission. It breaks the rules but it does it in sympathy with what is around it. The commission said that it will relieve the monotony of Exhibition Road — you can look at it and it is uplifting. It's an opportunity to show that we can deal with new architecture rather than being scared of it."

The Libeskind scheme, which won an architectural competition, was unveiled in May 1996. It was turned down for National Lottery funding by the Millennium Commission, and is now dependent on private support.

Last week, English Heritage chairman Sir Jocelyn Stevens said: "If Kensington and Chelsea turn this down, they may as well turn out the lights in Kensington."

Fingers crossed

IT'S no great surprise, I thought this would happen. It is one of the most difficult sites in London, and this was expected. Hopefully it will lead to a still better solution. The rejection by the planners is not the end of the world. Perhaps it is a good thing because both parties can sharpen up their views. You have to find a way of explaining the scheme and making it acceptable to the planners.

I'm not too pessimistic. Sometimes these things do need time to get right. When I saw the design, I thought it was such a brave proposal, and he has worked on it since and made it better. This not just a British thing — there are the same issues with planners across the world.

I honestly believe that bad architecture is often the result of too hasty development. I'm keeping my fingers crossed. I don't think this is the end of the story.

Eva Jiricna, architect, designer of Millennium Dome faith zone

Thumbs down

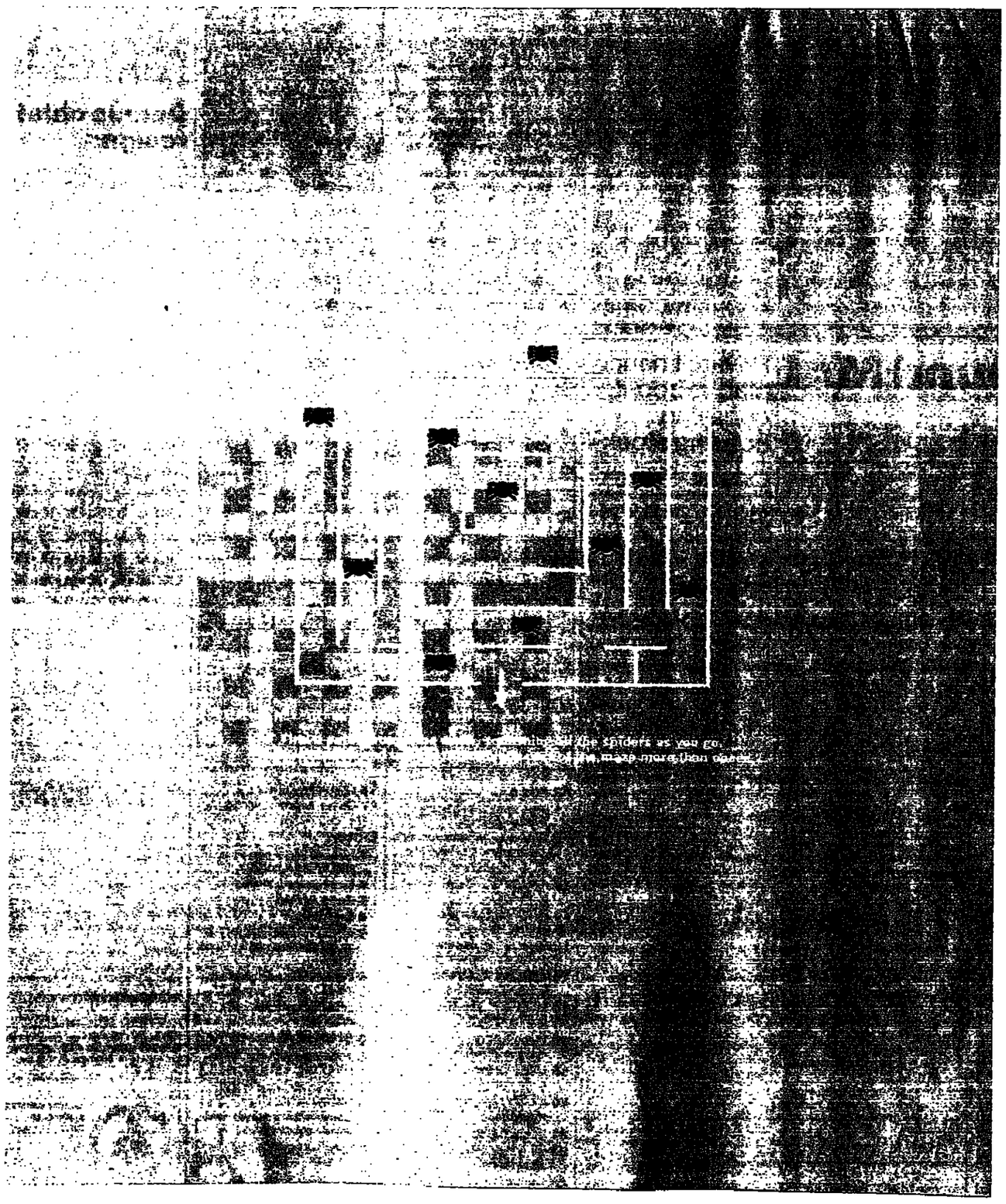
I WELCOME the outcome. I think the building is entirely unsuitable, it is grotesque. The moisture would be appalling in it. This beastly thing covered in tiles, they would have to spend all their time and money cleaning it.

I can only think that it is supported by people who have not seen his buildings in the flesh. They are shoddy. Put this in the middle of nowhere and it might be all right.

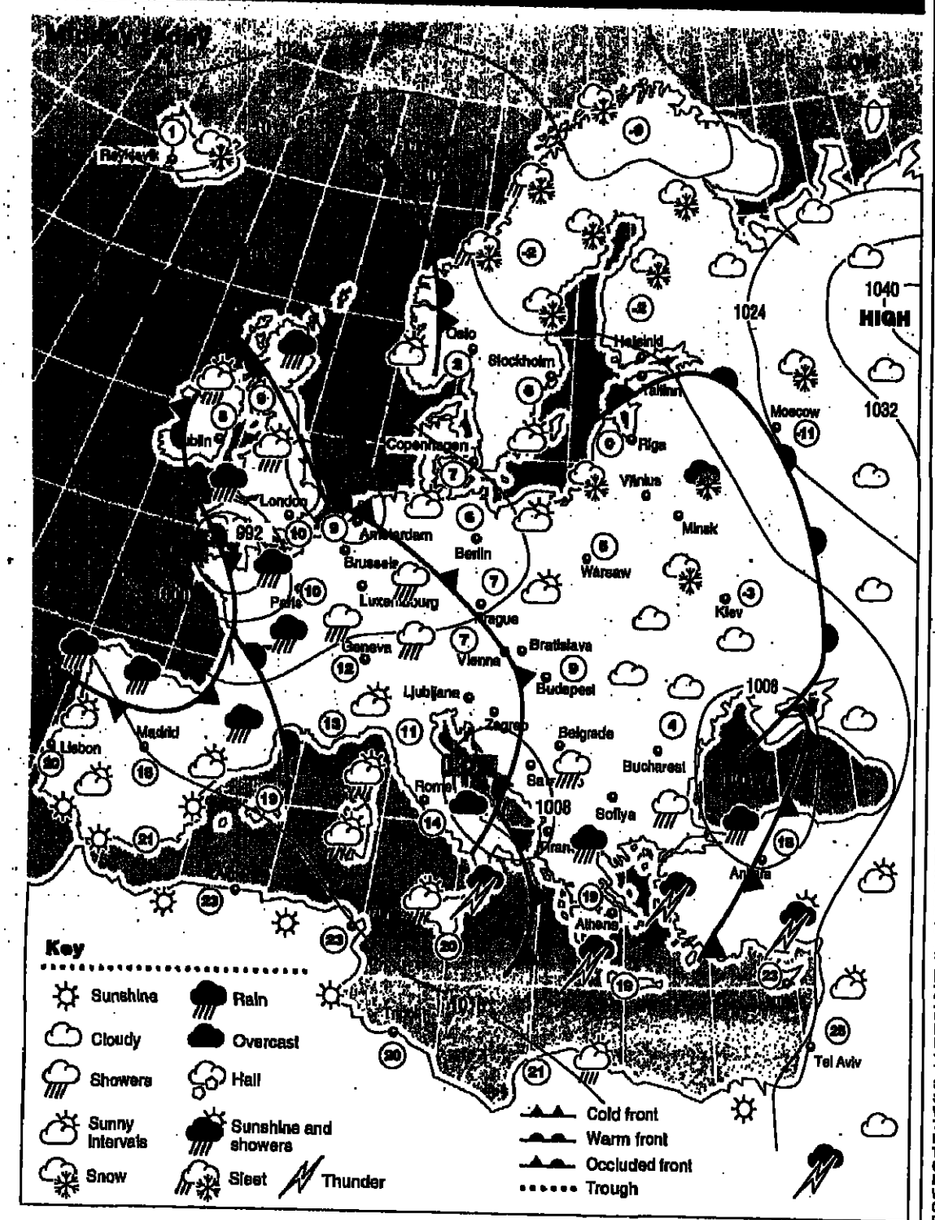
The thing that really galls me is the V&A's complaint that they've got nowhere to put things. My preferred solution is that the trustees of the V&A should sit down and say what is the purpose of the V&A? And they should shed everything that doesn't fit with their core purpose.

They should go through their collections before they start asking the lottery for millions of pounds to build things they don't really need.

Brian Sewell, art critic, Evening Standard



The weather in Europe



Forecast for the cities

Today

	max	min	weather
Algiers	23	15	S
Amsterdam	10	3	R
Athens	19	14	Th
Berlin	8	1	F
Bonn	8	4	Sh
Brussels	8	4	Sh
Copenhagen	6	1	F
Crete	19	15	Sh
Geneva	12	3	Sh
Lamaca	23	14	Th
London	10	6	R
Madrid	18	10	F
Milan	11	8	F
Nice	16	8	F
Oslo	2	-1	Sn
Paris	10	7	R
Rome	14	8	F
Stockholm	6	-2	Sl
Tunis	19	13	Sh
Vienna	7	1	R

Tomorrow

	max	min	weather
Algiers	24	13	F
Amsterdam	7	3	Sh
Athens	19	12	S
Berlin	5	1	D
Bonn	8	4	Sh
Brussels	8	3	Sh
Copenhagen	6	1	F
Crete	21	14	Sh
Geneva	10	3	R
Lamaca	23	14	Th
London	10	4	Sh
Madrid	18	8	F
Milan	11	8	Sh
Nice	17	9	F
Oslo	3	-1	Sn
Paris	10	4	Sh
Rome	16	8	F
Stockholm	6	-2	C
Tunis	22	14	Sh
Vienna	8	1	C

Sunday

	max	min	weather
Algiers	22	11	F
Amsterdam	8	3	Sh
Athens	19	14	F
Berlin	4	1	R
Bonn	7	1	Dr
Brussels	8	3	Sh
Copenhagen	8	1	Sh
Crete	22	19	Sh
Geneva	8	1	Th
Lamaca	23	13	Sh
London	10	4	Sh
Madrid	17	4	S
Milan	12	4	F
Nice	17	6	S
Oslo	3	-2	Sl
Paris	9	4	Sh
Rome	17	7	C
Stockholm	2	-3	C
Tunis	22	14	F
Vienna	7	1	R

Monday

	max	min	weather
Algiers	20	8	Sh
Amsterdam	8	2	Sh
Athens	21	15	S
Berlin	6	1	F
Bonn	7	0	Sh
Brussels	7	2	Sh
Copenhagen	5	0	F
Crete	23	16	Sh
Geneva	8	0	R
Lamaca	23	15	F
London	10	3	F
Madrid	17	2	S
Milan	12	3	S
Nice	17	5	S
Oslo	2	-4	F
Paris	9	3	Sh
Rome	16	6	F
Stockholm	2	-4	C
Tunis	21	13	F
Vienna	7	2	R

C, cloudy; Dr, drizzle; F, fair; Fg, fog; H, hail; R, rain; Sl, sleet; Sn, snow; S, sunny; Th, thunder. * (previous day's reading)

Around the world

Yesterday's lunchtime reports

Ajaccio	Sh	15	59
Algiers	C	22	72
Amsterdam	C	8	46
Anchorage	C	-3	27
Aswan	F	20	68
Auckland	F	16	61
B Aires	F	23	73
Barbados	F	31	88
Barcelona	F	17	63
Belgrade	F	9	48
Berlin	Sh	6	43
Bermuda	C	23	73
Biarritz	C	13*	55*
Bombay	S	33	91
Bordeaux	C	14	57
Boston	R	12	54
Brisbane	C	24	75
Brussels	F	7	45
Budapest	F	7	45
Cairo	F	24	75
Calcutta	F	29	84
Calgary	Sh	-3	26
Canberra	S	16	61
Cape Town	S	24	75
Casablanca	S	22	72
Chicago	S	9	48
Christchurch	F	12	54
Corfu	S	17	63
Dakar	S	34	93
Dallas	S	16	61
Darwin	F	31	88
Delhi	S	30	86
Dubai	Dr	34	93
Dubrovnik	R	9	48
Faro	F	22	72
Florence	F	12	54
Frankfurt	C	3	37
Funchal	F	21	70
Geneva	C	4	39
Gibraltar	C	21	70
Hamburg	C	4	39
Helsinki	C	-1	30
Hong Kong	S	24	75
Honolulu	S	29	84
Ibiza	F	19	66
Innsbruck	C	4	39
Istanbul	S	16	61
Jersey	Sh	11	52
Jerusalem	C	22	72
Joburg	F	21	70
Karachi	S	34	93
Kiev	Sn	-1	30
Kingston	F	31	88
Larnaca	F	24	75
Lima	F	24	75
Lisbon	F	20	68
Locarno	F	16	61
London	Sh	10	50
Los Angeles	C	16	61
Luxembourg	C	3	37
Madrid	F	18	64
Majorca	C	20	68
Malaga	F	23	73
Malta	F	23	73
Mecca	S	35	95
Melbourne	S	18	64
Mexico City	F	22	72
Miami	F	27	81
Milan	C	12	54
Montreal	C	10	50
Moscow	Sn	-3	27
Munich	C	3	37
Nairobi	F	27	81
Naples	F	17	63
New Delhi	S	33	91
New Orleans	C	17	63
Nice	C	13	55
Oslo	C	0	32
Paris	C	9	48
Perth	C	27	81
Prague	F	9	48
Reykjavik	Sl	2	36
Rhodes	F	23	73
Rio de Jan.	F	29	84
Rome	F	17	63
Singapore	R	27	81
Stockholm	M	2	36
Strasbourg	F	5	41
Sydney	F	21	70
Tel Aviv	S	24	75
Tenerife	C	22	72
Tokyo	C	18	64
Toronto	Sh	6	43
Tunis	C	19	66
Valletta	F	24	75
Vancouver	C	8	46
Venice	F	11	52
Vienna	F	4	39
Warsaw	C	1	34
Washington	F	17	63
Wellington	C	17	63
Zurich	C	5	41

European weather outlook

Scandinavia:

Finland and the northern half of Sweden and Norway will stay below freezing all day and will continue to have some snow. Southern areas will be less cold. Max temps 6-7C (43-45F) in the south but only -10C to -7C (14-19F) in the north.

Low Countries, Germany, Austria, Switzerland:

A weak cold front will bring light rain through Holland and into western Germany and Austria. Eastern Germany and Switzerland will be brighter. Highs from 6C (41F) over eastern Germany up to 10C over the Low Countries.

France:

Rain will edge across much of France during the day. However, eastern areas will start dry with sunshine and the south coast should stay fine. Highs 9-12C, but 13-15C in the south.

Spain and Portugal:

The northern coasts and mountains of Spain and Portugal will become dull with some rain. Central areas will be drier with sunny spells. The south will be sunny and warm. Highs from 18C in the north up to 21-24C in the south.

Italy:

Central and southern Italy will be unsettled with thundery showers. However, northern areas will be drier with sunny spells. Highs, 11-14C in the north, 17-20C in the south.

Greece:

An unsettled day with some locally heavy and thundery showers mixed with sunny spells. Highs 16-19C (61-66F).

Television and Radio

BBC 1

7.00am Business Breakfast. 9.00 Breakfast News. 10.00 Kilroy. 10.40 Style Challenge. 11.05 City Hospital. 11.55 News and Weather. 12.00 Rail Rooms. 12.25 Can't Cook, Won't Cook. 12.55 News and Weather. 1.00 Pass the Buck. 1.30 Going for a Song. 1.50 The Weather Show. 2.00 News. 2.30 Regional News and Weather. 2.40 Neighbours. 3.05 Inside. 3.25 Wipeout. 4.05 Playday. 4.40 Bananaman. 4.50 The All-New Popeye Show. 4.55 Dear Mr Blobby. 5.10 Ace Ventura: Pet Detective. 5.35 Lydon's Record Breakers. 6.00 Newsround. 6.10 Blue Peter. 6.35 Neighbours. 7.00 News. 7.30 Regional News Magazine. 8.00 Weekend Watchdog with Anne Robinson. 8.30 Top of the Pops. 9.00 Changing Rooms. 9.30 Party of a Lifetime. 10.00 News. 10.30 Dangerfield. 11.05 FILM: Commando. 12.40 The Stand-Up Show. 1.10 FILM: Exclusive Force. 2.35 Weather. 2.40 BBC News 24.

BBC 2

7.10am Slane Cathedral. 8.00 Children's BBC: Hairy Jeremy. 8.05 Teletubbies. 8.30 Tom and Jerry Kids. 8.55 Sport. 9.20 Robinson Rucso. 9.40 Johnson and Friends. 9.55 Hairy Jeremy. 10.20 Daytime on Two: Dynamo. 10.40 See You, See Me. 10.50 Watch. 10.55 Come Outside. 11.00 Children's BBC: Teletubbies. 11.30 Daytime on Two: Magamutts. 11.50 Look and Read. 12.10 Landmarks. 12.30 English File. 1.00 Testament: The Bible in Animation. 1.50 Watch. Lunch. 2.00 Oliver's BBC: Johnson and Friends. 2.25 Sophie Grigson's Herbs. 2.45 The History Hour. 3.10 Match of Their Day. 5.40 News; Regional News and Weather. 5.55 On Cue. 6.25 News; Regional News and Weather. 6.30 Gardeners' World. 6.50 Change That. 6.55 Ready, Steady, Cook. 7.25 Liver!. 8.20 Celebrity Today's the Day. 7.00 The Simpsons. 7.45 Robot Wars. 8.15 Skodo Circus. 8.30 Bookworm. 9.00 Wilderness Walks. 9.30 Gardening Neighbours. 10.00 Blackadder Goes Forth. 10.30 Goodness Gracious Me. 11.00 Have I Got News for You. 11.30 Newsnight. 12.15 Stella Street. 12.30 Later with Jools Holland. 1.30 Comedy Nation. 2.00 Cats 2I. 2.30 Weather. 2.35 Close. 4.00 Learning Zone. 5.00 Close.

BBC Prime

⊕ Eutelsat

5.00am World News. 5.25 World Weather. 5.30 Wheni Bani Strawberry Jam! 5.45 Blue Peter. 6.10 Orange Hill. 6.45 Ready, Steady, Cook. 10.15 Style Challenge. 10.40 Change That. 11.05 Kilroy. 11.45 EastEnders. 12.15 Our Man in. 1.00 Floyd on France. 1.30 Ready, Steady, Cook. 2.20 Can't Cook, Won't Cook. 2.30 Change That. 2.55 Holiday Weather. 3.00 Wildlife. 3.25 EastEnders. 4.00 Kilroy. 4.40 Style Challenge. 5.05 Holiday Weather. 5.10 Hot Chefs. 5.30 Wheni Bani Strawberry Jam! 5.55 Blue Peter. 6.00 Orange Hill. 6.30 Wildlife. 7.00 World News. 7.25 World Weather. 7.30 Ready, Steady, Cook. 8.00 EastEnders. 8.30 Dale Smith's Winter Collection. 9.00 You Rang M'Lord? 9.30 How to Be a Little B*d. 10.00 Casualty. 10.50 Meetings With Remarkable Trees. 11.00 World News. 11.05 World Weather. 11.10 Later with Jools Holland. 12.30 Red Dwarf III. 2.00 Dr Who: Horror of Fang Rock. 2.50 Seeing is Believing. 3.30 Chemistry of Power.

BBC World

⊕ Eutelsat

5.00am World News. 5.30 Top Gear. 6.00 World News. 6.30 Hard Talk. 10.00 World News: 10.30 Panorama. 11.00 World News. 11.30 Hard Talk. 12.00 World News. 12.30 The Net. 1.00 The World Today. 2.00 The World Today. 2.30 Panorama. 3.00 World News. 3.15 World Business Report. 3.30 The World Today. 4.30 Earth Report. 4.55 World City Guides. 5.00 World News. 5.30 Hard Talk. 6.00 World News. 6.30 Panorama. 7.00 World News and Weather. 7.30 Top Gear. 8.00 The World Today. 9.30 Hard Talk. 10.00 World News. 10.30 Commonwealth. 11.00 World News. 11.10 World Business Report. 11.20 Future Fantastic. 12.00 World News. 12.10 Europe Direct. 12.25 World City Guides. 1.00 World News. 1.30 World Business Report. 1.45 Asia Today. 1.55 World City Guides. 2.00 World News. 2.30 Floyd's American Pie. 3.00 News and Weather. 3.30 Asia Today. 3.45 World Business Report. 3.55 World City Guides. 4.00 News. 4.30 USA Direct. 5.00 News. 5.30 Hard Talk. 8.00 News and Weather. 8.30 USA Direct.

Radio 4

92.4-94.8 MHz; 198 kHz (1514)

7.00am Today. 9.45 (LW) Yesterday in Parliament. 10.00 Desert Island Discs. 10.45 (FM) Serial: Memoirs of an Infantry Officer. 11.15 (LW) An Act of Worship. 11.00 Women's Hour. 12.00 Flying Starts. 12.30 Globe. 1.00 (LW) News Headlines; Shipping Forecast. 1.02 News. 1.04 You and Yours. 2.00 The World at One. 2.30 Screen Test. 3.00 The Archers. 3.15 Afternoon Play: In Singapore. 4.00 Making History. 4.30 Dodfather Obs. 4.45 Feedback. 5.00 Open Book. 5.30 The Message. 6.00 PM. 7.00 Sir O'Dock News. 7.30 True Lies. 8.00 The Archers. 8.15 Front Row. 8.45 Sill Voices. 9.00 Any Questions? 9.45 Letter from America. 10.00 The Friday Play: Mother Teresa in Kilburn. 11.00 The World Tonight. 11.45 Book at Bedtime: Le Grand Meaulnes. 12.00 Late Night on 4: Late Tackle. 12.30 (FM) Notes from the Dtch. 12.30 (LW) Today in Parliament. 1.00 News. 1.30 The Late Book: News of a Kidnapping. 1.45 Shipping Forecast. 2.00 As World Service. 6.54 Shipping Forecast.

BBC World Service

BBC World Service can be received in England on MW 648 kHz (463m) and in Western Europe on LW 198 kHz (1515m)

7.00am The Way We Are. 7.45 Transplantations. 8.00 News. 8.15 Off the Shelf: Tales from Ovid 10/10. 8.30 Music Review. 9.00 News. 9.10 Pause for Thought. 9.15 Westway. 9.30 John Peel. 10.00 News; (FM) only) News in German. 10.45 World Business Report. 10.50 Early Versions. 10.30 Speaking of English. 10.45 Sports Round-Up. 11.00 Newsdesk. 11.30 Assignment. 12.00 Newsdesk. 12.30 Focus on Faith. 1.00 News. 1.05 World Business Report. 1.15 Britain Today. 1.30 Wood, Oats and Bean. 1.45 Sports Round-Up. 2.00 Newshour. 3.00 News. 3.05 Outlook. 3.30 Multitrack: Alternative. 4.00 News; (648 only) News in German. 4.05 Football Extra. 4.15 To Be Continued. 4.30 Science in Action. 5.00 News. 5.15 Soundworks. 5.30 Insight; (648 only) News in German. 5.45 Britain Today. 6.00 Europe Today. 6.30 World Business Report. 6.45 Sports Round-Up. 7.00 Newsdesk. 7.30 Focus On Faith; (648 only) News in German. 8.00 News; Outlook. 8.30 Pause For Thought. 8.45 Multitrack Alternative. 9.00 Newshour. 10.00 News. 10.05 World Business Report. 10.15 Britain Today. 10.30 People and Politics. 11.00 Newsdesk. 11.30 Insight. 11.45 Sports Round-Up. 12.00 News. 12.05 Outlook. 12.30 Multitrack Alternative. 1.00 Newsdesk. 1.30 From the Weeklies. 1.45 Britain Today. 2.00 Newsdesk. 2.30 To Be Continued. 2.45 Poems by Post. 3.00 Newsday. 3.30 People and Politics. 4.00 News. 4.05 World Business Report. 4.15 Sports Round-Up. 4.30 Science in Action. 5.00 Newsdesk. 5.30 Insight. 5.45 Off the Shelf.

Sky Premier

⊕ Astra

7.00 The Karate Kid II. 9.00 That Thing You Do! PG. 11.00 Switching Channels. 1.00 The Karate Kid II. 3.00 King Ralph. 5.00 Switching Channels. 7.00 What the Deaf Man Heard. 9.00 That Thing You Do! PG. 11.00 Dennis Bracco. 1.00 Courage Under Fire. 3.55 Cobblecock. 4.40 Screamers.

Sky Movies Max

⊕ Astra

7.00 Battle for the Planet of the Apes. 8.30 White Dwarf. 10.15 No More Bethel U. 12.00 Bury Me in Niagara. 2.00 Battle for the Planet of the Apes. 3.30 White Dwarf. 5.00 No More Bethel 5.00 PReview. 5.30 UK Top 10. 6.00 Femmes Fatales: Sandra Bullock. 6.30 Cheech and Chong's The Corsican Brothers. 11.00 Bulletproof. 12.35 Twin Town. 2.05 The Krays. 4.05 See No Evil, Hear No Evil.

Sky Cinema

⊕ Astra

7.00 The Naked Runner. 9.00 I Walk the Line. 11.00 Days of Glory. 12.50 Marathon Man. 2.50 Pony Express. 4.35 Top Hat.

Sky Sports

⊕ Astra

7.30 Futures in Sport. 8.00 Sports Centre. 8.15 VIP Wrestling. 9.15 Sports Centre. 9.30 Racing News. 10.00 Aerobics On Style. 10.30 Football: Spanish Primera Liga. 12.30 Motorsport. 1.00 Aerobics On Style. 1.30 Football League Review. 2.00 Futbol Mundial. 2.30 What A Weekend. 3.00 Motorsport: Formula Three. 3.30 Watersports World. 4.30 The Rugby Club. 5.30 Trans World Sport. 6.30 What A Weekend. 7.00 Sports Centre. 8.00 Speedway. 10.30 World Sport Special. 11.00 Sports Centre. 12.00 Hold the Back Page. 1.00 Sports Centre. 2.00 WWF Wrestling. 4.00 Football: FA Cup First Round. 7.00 Close.

Sky Sports 3

⊕ Astra

12.30 Futures in Sport. 1.00 Trans World Sport. 2.00 Fishing: Tight Lines. 3.00 Bobby Charlton's Football Scrapbook. 4.30 Rebel TV. 5.00 Motorsport: Champion of the Future. 5.30 Motorsport: Formula Three. 6.00 H2O. 6.30 World Sport Special. 7.00 Max Power. 8.00 Rebel TV. 8.30 Golf: Inside the Senior PGA Tour. 9.00 World Sport Special. 9.30 H2O. 10.00 Max Power. 11.00 WWF Wrestling: Raw. 1.00 Close.

Eurosport

⊕ Astra/Eutelsat

5.30 Fun Sports. 8.00 Bobsleigh. 10.00 Weightlifting. 12.00 Motorsport. 1.00 Tennis: The Kremlin Open – Live. 2.30 Weightlifting. 3.45 Tennis. 4.30 Weightlifting. 5.30 Tennis. 8.00 Weightlifting. 9.00 Boxing. 10.00 Motorcycling. 12.00 Extreme Sports. 1.30 Close.

Sky One

⊕ Astra

6.00 The Simpsons. 8.30 The Chris Evans Breakfast Show. 8.35 Hollywood Squares. 10.00 Gotcha! 11.00 Sally Jessy Raphael. 12.00 The Oprah Winfrey Show. 1.00 The Chris Evans Breakfast Show. 1.55 The Specialk K Collection. 2.00 Days of Our Lives. 2.55 The Specialk K Collection. 3.00 Sally Jessy Raphael. 3.55 The Specialk K Collection. 4.00 Jenny Jones. 4.55 The Specialk K Collection. 5.00 Gotcha! 6.00 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. 7.00 Married...With Children. 7.30 Friends. 8.00 The Simpsons. 10.00 Wilder: Texas Ranger. 11.00 Cops. 11.30 Cops. 12.00 Friends. 12.30 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. 1.00 Renegade. 2.50 Long Play.

National Geographic

⊕ Astra

9.00 Bird Leading the Blind. 10.00 Spunky Monkey. 10.30 A Lizard's Summer. 11.00 Among the Wild Chimpanzees. 12.00 Stranded. 12.30 Big Guy: The Florida Panther. 1.00 Out of the Melting Pot. 1.30 As It Wasn't in the Beginning. 2.00 Close.

UK Gold

⊕ Astra

5.00 Crossroads. 5.30 Neighbours. 5.55 EastEnders. 6.20 The Bill. 10.30 Bergerac. 11.30 Angels. 12.30 Dallas. 12.55 Neighbours. 1.20 EastEnders. 2.00 Juliet Bravo. 3.00 Dallas. 3.55 The Bill. 4.25 The Bill. 4.55 Bergerac. 5.55 EastEnders. 6.30 Angels. 7.00 Due South. 8.00 Last of the Summer Wine. 8.40 It Ain't Half Hot, Mum. 9.20 Open All Hours. 10.00 Man Behaving Badly. 10.40 Auf Wiedersehen, Pet. 11.40 Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads? 12.30 The Bill. 12.55 The Bill. 1.55 Dr Who. 4.00 Shopping at Night.

Discovery

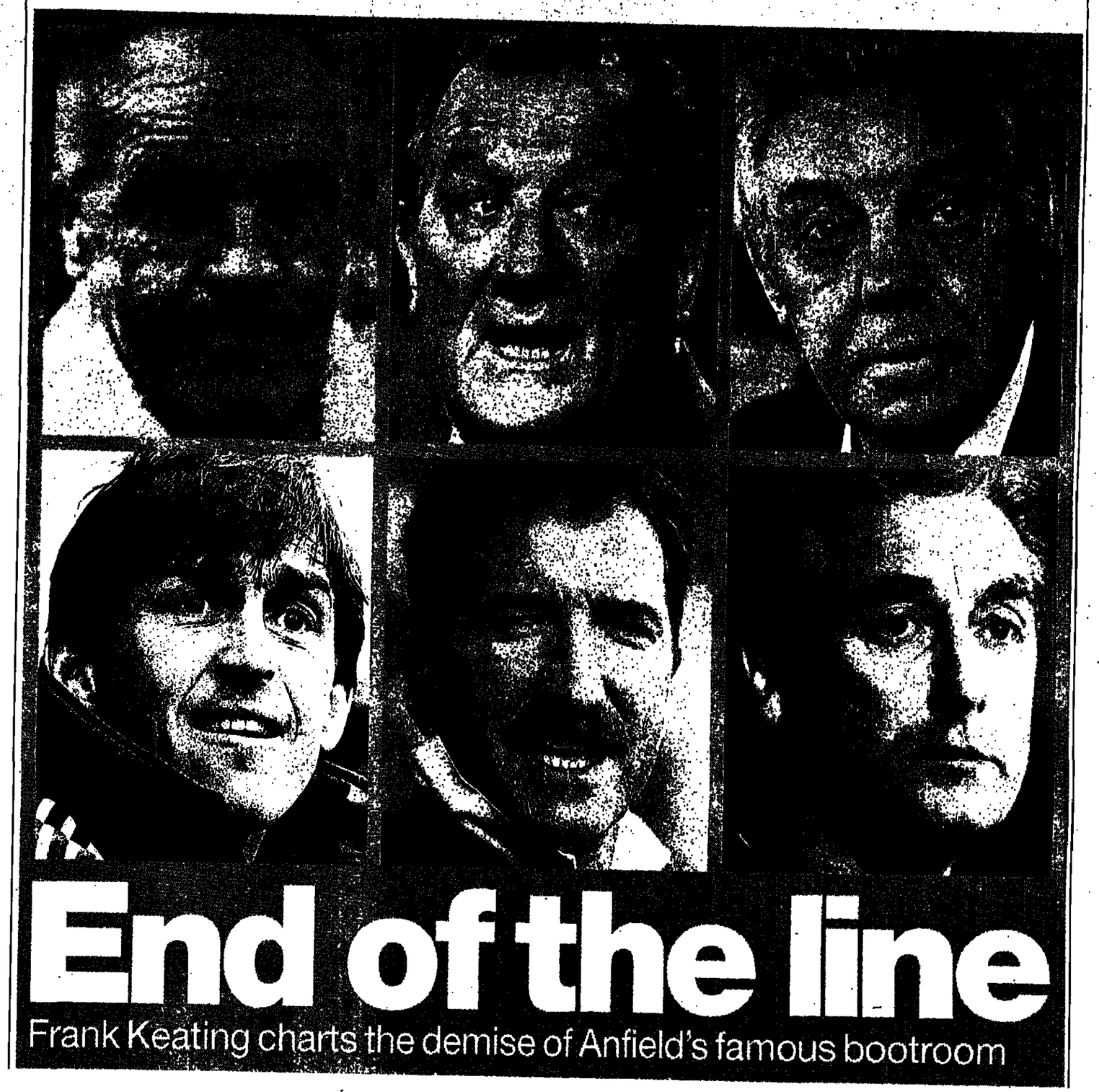
⊕ Astra/Eutelsat

5.00 First Flights. 5.30 Ancient Warfare. 7.00 Animal Doctor. 7.30 Ocean Killers I Have Known. 8.30 Beyond 2000. 9.00 The Best of Discovery: The Mosquito Story. 10.00 Crocodile Hunter. 11.00 The Great Egyptians. 12.00 The Century of Warfare. 1.00 Real Luna: Birth of a Salesman. 2.00 First Flights. 2.30 Wheel Nuts. 3.00 Close.

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The Guardian Sport98

Friday November 13 1998 www.cricket98.co.uk



End of the line

Frank Keating charts the demise of Anfield's famous bootroom



Double act ends in failure

Liverpool called a halt to their experiment with joint managers yesterday as Roy Evans left after 33 years at Anfield. **Ian Ross** reports





LIVERPOOL yesterday entrusted their immediate future to Gérard Houllier after abandoning their attempts to prove the worth of the twin-manager system. The club announced that Houllier's partner Roy Evans was leaving Anfield after a one-club career which has spanned 33 years.

Liverpool's chairman David Moores confirmed Evans had declined an invitation to stay on at the club in an unspecified capacity. Evans said: "It would have been easy for me to stay around and become a ghost on the wall. To give Gérard and his team a real chance, I have to walk away."

Houllier was immediately handed sole responsibility for football matters at a club eliminated from the Worthington Cup on Tuesday and struggling in the bottom half of the Premiership. Evans's assistant, Doug Livermore, was the other major casualty on a day of change, which Liverpool were understandably anxious to promote as more watershed than messy upheaval.

Livermore will be replaced, surprisingly, by the former Liverpool and England captain Phil Thompson, whose Anfield career appeared to end in 1992 when he was sacked as reserve-team coach.

Thompson has a deserved reputation as an outspoken disciplinarian and is likely to be asked to play bad cop to Houllier's good cop. "I think I have been brought in to add steel and discipline — to kick a few backsides," said Thompson.

Although Evans's departure was inevitably described as "amicable and friendly", it was not at all unexpected. His fate was sealed last month when the team he assembled at such vast expense — £40 million in less than five years — became marooned in a patch of wretched form.

Liverpool have overcome only three sides in their past 14 games — the Slovakian minnows Kosice (twice), Nottingham Forest and Fulham. Despite reaching the last 16 of the Uefa Cup by defeating Valencia on away goals 10 days ago, the pressure had begun to mount on the Liverpool board to concede their experiment had failed.

The buck stopped at the desk of Moores, an admirer and confidant of Evans for many years. Moores was initially reluctant to see his old friend go but once Evans insisted that his club must come first, a compromise deal which will involve substantial compensation was thrashed out.

"This is a desperately sad day for me because I have known and admired Roy for so many years," said Moores.

Evans said he realised several weeks ago that in football management two heads were definitely not better than one.

"It wasn't quite the right formula for the players," he said. "Perhaps they weren't sure who the boss was. The bigger mistake would have been for us to carry on as if it was working because that would have been to the detriment of the club.

"I went into the partnership with my eyes open, but I realised a few weeks ago that something wasn't quite right. I went to the people upstairs — people I class as friends — and simply told them I didn't think it was working."

Despite having spent his entire adult life at Anfield, Evans insisted he still envisaged a future inside football.

"To be honest I can't envisage working for any other club but, having said that, I'm only 50 and not ready for the dustbin just yet," he said.

Houllier said: "It is a strange feeling to be here on my own; this is my saddest day since I joined Liverpool. I accepted this job on the one condition that I would be working with Roy.

"But, after a few months we realised it was going to be difficult to work together. Our relationship was smashing but we realised it was proving difficult for the players."

With Liverpool not having bought since his arrival, Houllier will be handed substantial funds to build a squad in his own image. "We need some players, we know that," he said. "It won't be easy to get them because there's not a lot of quality around."



New duo ... Gérard Houllier, far left, lines up with Phil Thompson as Roy Evans says farewell to David Moores, above. Evans inherited the legacy of Bill Shankly (main picture) and, right, celebrates Liverpool's last League title with Ronnie Moran and Kenny Dalglish in 1990

PHOTOGRAPHS: CLIVE BRUNSKILL, W HODGSON

Out with credo on the day the Bootroom died

Frank Keating mourns the final passing of a shrine that spawned an era of greatness



ROY EVANS was 25 when he was granted entry, without knocking, to Anfield's holy-of-holies, the fabled Bootroom.

It was 1974 and the young Scouse defender had realised the season before that his First Division playing days were numbered. He had made a sporadic handful of first team appearances when he overheard retiring manager Bill Shankly's throwaway remark to the effect that Evans was not up to the top grade. "I agree the lad's pace can be deceptive," rasped Shankly, before adding: "He's much slower than you think."

Sure enough, the new manager Bob Paisley told him he had no future as a Liverpool player — "but we would like you to join the coaching staff". Welcome to the Bootroom.

I only once poked my head into the Anfield Bootroom — and it wasn't until I left that I realised I had actually done so, such an unlikely and pokey little broom cupboard it was, in the corridor under the main stand. I would have been awestruck had I been

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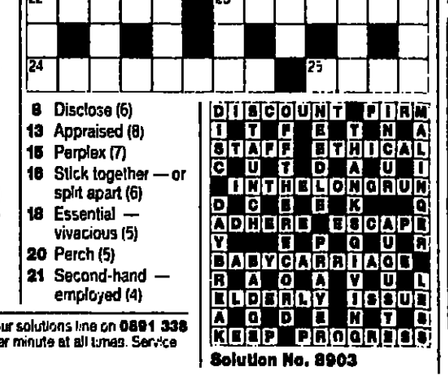
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Quick Crossword No. 8904



Across

1 Brass musical instrument (4)
3 Exact (8)
9 One who massages (7)
10 Court game (5)
11 Hurry (5)
12 Whole (6)
14 Shoes with narrow, pointed toes (6-7)
17 Rough — odd (6)
19 Weird (5)
22 Break down — reveal a secret (5)
23 Begrudging — covetous (7)
24 Devastated — forlorn (8)
25 Horse stable — boss (4)

Down

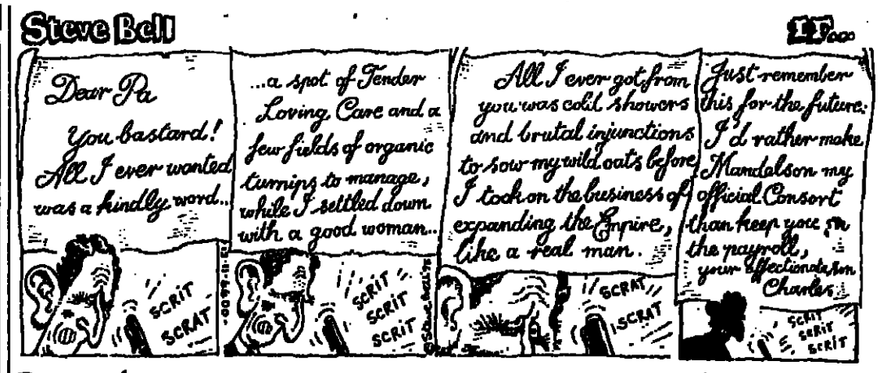
1 War hatchet (8)
2 Foundation (5)
4 Letter-writer (13)
5 Inappropriate — unhealthy (5)
6 Hostile — inauspicious (7)
7 Otherwise (4)
8 Disclose (6)
13 Appraised (8)
15 Perplex (7)
16 Stick together — or split apart (6)
18 Essential — vivacious (5)
20 Perch (5)
21 Second-hand — employed (4)

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aware of the shrine I had ducked in and out of.

Shankly's office — he seldom used his official one next to the boardroom — was next door, another slanting little cubbyhole ceilinged by nailed-on slats of hardboard in which any six-footer had to crouch. It was as if to proclaim: "I'm not a directors' manager; I'm a players' manager."

The Bootroom did in fact have a serried line of racks on which the boots of the first team players were stored; more pairs hung from hooks. There really was the smell of Cherry Blossom, the whiff of Dickens's "blacking factory". There was one wonky, double-doored cupboard where they kept a full bottle of whisky — for use only after five o'clock on "home" Saturdays, when visiting managers would be mischievously "milked" for info. Seats were no more than a few basket-work laundry skips. But European Cups were plotted here, and won.

Increasingly through the Sixties, as Shankly's first team of spirit and grandeur began to conquer England before spreading its wings over Europe, the Bootroom took on a mythic status. This was where the club's style and policy, its tactical and personal fabric, its very heritage, was mined, sieved, threshed, and then acted upon.

I was no Liverpool supporter, but Shankly's tofemesque and one-off qualities made them, for a generation or two, all England's (barring Everton men, that is) second most admired club. By the time Europe was taken by storm, everyone in the global game had heard of Anfield's almost sacred Bootroom.

I still have a touching photograph, sepia-washed and dog-eared now, of Shankly in his too-tight grey suit standing sheepishly behind his Bootroom troops — Bob Paisley, Joe Fagan, Ronnie Moran, and Reuben Bennett. Paisley, the north-easterner and Army "Desert Rat", had been a doughty Liverpool wing-half in the Forties. Fagan a Liverpudlian non-League player: both, of course, were to become successors as manager to Shankly. Liverpool's envied continuity flowed from the Bootroom — and, somehow, had done so from the first morning of Shankly's arrival from Huddersfield Town in December 1959.

Shankly's first act had been to assemble Paisley, Fagan, the Scot Bennett, and odd-job man Albert Shelley — each had presumed the sack there and then — to tell them: "I'm not bringing in my own men, I'm keeping you all on as long as you can guarantee me just one thing — utter loyalty, loyalty to each other, and loyalty to Liverpool FC."

All for one, one for all. At a stroke it had become Liverpool's credo. And the Bootroom's.

Loyalty and trust. Fifteen years later, when Evans was "initiated" into the Bootroom by Paisley, those two foundations were gospel. Evans was a disciple, a true inheritor. Which made yesterday's news, almost a quarter of a century after he had first been inducted into the Bootroom proper, all the more poignantly sad. Even though, in fact, the actual old Bootroom has long been a pressroom annexe, its mystical and spiritual symbolism had lived on in Evans — until yesterday.

The resplendence of the Bootroom glories (and stories) under the successive stewardships of Shankly, Paisley and Fagan were dimmed, it is said, when Kenny Dalglish stepped from the pitch (and over the heads of both Moran and Evans) into the manager's chair in 1985.

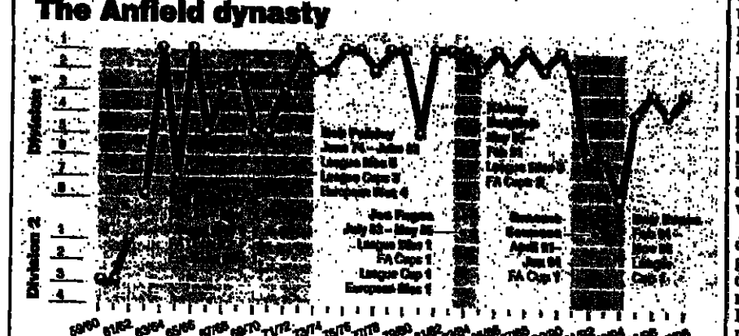
But in his earnest and fulsome autobiography Dalglish is at pains to dispute this: "It is utter rubbish that I dismantled the great Bootroom. It is an institution, one I would never have meddled with...

"But I never went in there after games for one very good reason. I wasn't clever enough. I knew what Ronnie and Roy did to visitors from other clubs. They would sit in their famous hideaway, chatting away, dispensing a little bit of liquid hospitality to visiting managers and coaches. But it was so cunning.

"All the while Ronnie and Roy were picking up little bits of information about players, perhaps even tactics, new ideas, how other people were working... Ronnie and Roy soaked up everything and anything. It was gossip and more."

The actual physical little dingy sanctum under the grandstand stairs vanished during the management reign of Graeme Souness. Its overwhelming spiritual presence died only yesterday afternoon.

The Anfield dynasty



"I did for 40 years."

Football

Schmeichel to quit United and save career

Goalkeeping great in time added on, reports **Michael Walker**

MANCHESTER United's rolling revolution, which has seen key individuals such as Paul Ince, Eric Cantona, Steve Bruce and Gary Pallister leave in recent seasons, continued yesterday with Peter Schmeichel's announcement that he would be departing Old Trafford at the end of this season.

Schmeichel, 35 next Wednesday, has come to the conclusion: "I need more time between games than I can get in England. I need to train more than I have ever had to in order to prepare myself properly — and I certainly need more than 12 days' summer holiday."

A niggling back injury that caused Schmeichel to miss two Premiership games last month seems to have been a factor in the decision to leave United — and English football — the Dane referring to the limited periods of recovery available when he said: "Unfortunately the demands of the game here mean that I cannot get the time that I need, which is something I truly regret."

There has been speculation linking Schmeichel with the physically less demanding French League, but in typically forthright fashion the 6ft 4in keeper said his future after Old Trafford was uncertain and that he would be focusing single-mindedly on the remainder of his time at the club.

"It is important that I'm now allowed to concentrate totally on playing for United," he said. "I have had a fantastic career with United and I owe it to the club, the players and fans to do everything I can to finish on a successful note."

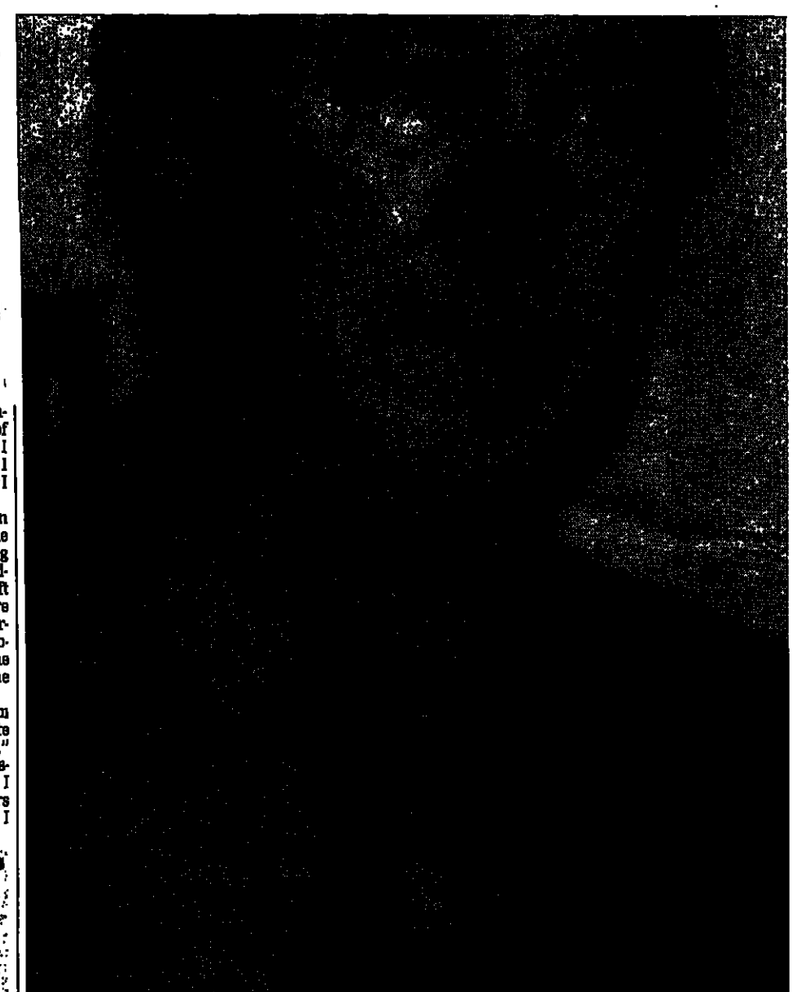
Even if United end this season empty-handed, Schmeichel has been part of 12 major trophies and the manager Alex Ferguson acknowledged the significance of his contribution.

"Peter has been a model professional who has inspired and influenced everyone. It is his professional attitude that has led him to make this decision and, whilst I know it has been difficult, I respect and fully support him."

Mark Bosnich, available on a Bosman-free transfer from Aston Villa next June and a former United player, is said to be Ferguson's preferred choice as Schmeichel's successor, although there may be some competition from Roma for the Australian's services. Another possible target, Ipswich Town's Richard Wright, is thought to be too young while Mark Schwarzer signed a new five-year contract at Middlesbrough last week.

Schmeichel, signed from Brondby in August 1991 for £550,000, is arguably Ferguson's best pound-for-pound buy in the Scot's 12 years in charge at Old Trafford. Schmeichel has played a decisive role in all of the Premiership, FA and League Cup triumphs in the past six seasons.

For example, during United's 1995-96 Double-winning season, he kept 22 clean



Ferguson's best buys

- Steve Bruce (1/2/87) £800,000 from Norwich City
- Denis Irwin (2/9/90) £625,000 from Oldham Athletic
- Andrei Kanchelskis (29/3/91) £650,000 from Shakhtar Donetsk
- Peter Schmeichel (12/8/91) £550,000 from Brondby
- Eric Cantona (27/11/92) £1.2 million from Leeds United

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*Offer only available in selected European cities. See table for details.

Sharpe cut out of O'Leary's plans

LEE SHARPE, Leeds' record signing at £4.5 million, has played his last game for the Elland Road club. He was put on the transfer list by the new manager David O'Leary yesterday.

O'Leary has taken little time to decide the 27-year-old England international has no future at Leeds. "I have placed Lee on the list in the best interests of everybody concerned," said the manager.

"It is not his decision but mine. He doesn't figure in my plans, so I have made him available and we'll see what offers we receive."

The winger responded strongly. "I've battled my way back after injury and now all I need is a run of half a dozen games. David O'Leary isn't going to give that to me, so it is a bit frustrating. He said I was too good to carry on being an unused substitute, so it would be best if I looked elsewhere.

"When he was placed in temporary charge after George Graham left he picked me in the first match against Leicester and I thought I did enough to warrant another chance, but it didn't happen."

Sharpe was then surprisingly recalled for the Uefa Cup return with Roma last week. But he said: "I couldn't understand why he picked me against Roma because I hadn't played for three weeks. I was hardly likely to be at my best after so long out of the side and against one of the best teams in Europe. It was a case of sink or swim."



Sharpe . . . no Leeds future

Sharpe, signed by Howard Wilkinson from Manchester United in the summer of 1996, has failed to win back a regular first-team place after missing all last season with a knee ligament injury. He was an unused substitute in Leeds' Worthington Cup defeat at Leicester on Wednesday.

Bryan Robson's Middlesbrough may offer him that chance although he could yet return to Manchester after City attempted to take him to Maine Road on loan last week.

● Joey Beauchamp, Oxford United's winger, last night left the First Division club, currently £13 million in debt, in an £800,000 move to Nottingham Forest.

Chris Hawkins sides with the cross-country specialist in Cheltenham's unique test for chasers

McGregor The Third goes forth

A FOURTH win for McGregor The Third over Cheltenham's curious cross country course looks very much on the cards in the Sporting Index Chase this afternoon.

The strange array of obstacles has proved no problem for Nicky Richards's chaser in the past as he won the first two runnings of this race and, although missing last season's event, returned in January to take the shorter version over three miles and a furlong.

In fact a thorough test of stamina suits McGregor The Third (3.35) very well and Richards believes his liking for the track will stand him in good stead today although, ideally, the trainer would have liked a little more time to get the 12-year-old spot on after a recent setback.

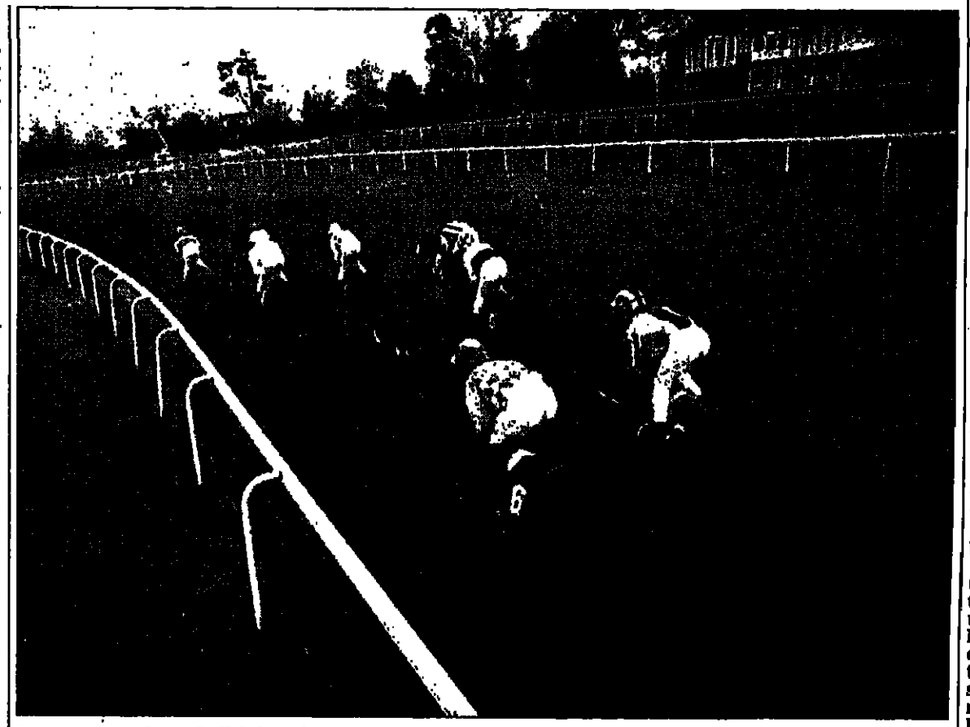
Fiftysevenchannels won the corresponding race last year, beating the Czech challenger Marketplace just under two lengths. Marketplace tries again (meeting his conqueror on 3lb better terms) but his compatriot Devil, runner-up in the Velka Pardubicka last month, could be a bigger danger.

Premier Generation (1.50), from the in-form stable of Nicky Henderson, looks nicely treated in the Murphy's Irish Stout Novice Handicap Hurdle. He has been in good form on the Flat.

The Mitsubishi Shogun Chase has attracted only five runners but still looks difficult to solve. My choice is Golden Hello (2.25), who has plenty of pace and was far from disgraced when humping 12st 5lb into second place behind The Eens at Haydock.

A case can be made for all five in the Steel Plate And Sections Chase and indeed this looks the best event for staying novices so far this season. Over the course and distance last month Song Of The Sword had four lengths to spare over Shore Party (now 2lb worse off) but the latter could be improved here by the fitting of blinkers. Spendid won on his debut at Wetherby while Gillian Cove, a useful staying hurdler, was impressive over fences at Newton Abbot recently.

The most experienced member of the field is Moscow Express (3.00), who won four in a row in Ireland before running creditably when fourth to Dorans Pride at Gowran Park. He was receiving a stone from the winner and was no doubt flattered but it was still a fair effort for a novice.



Tail-enders . . . Opera Buff (left) and Alsahib chase the leaders at Lingfield yesterday PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK BARON

Racing results

LINGFIELD

12.50 (1m 2f) 1, CHAIRMANS GHOICE, S Clancy (10-1); 2, Bank On Him (9-2); 3, Byzantium (12-1). 7–2 fav Uyssatic. 10 ran. 2, 4L (A Jarvis) Tote: £16.90; £3.60, £1.80. £4.30. Dual F: £37.20. CSF: £91.48. Tricast: £630.49.

12.20 (6f) 1, AL HASROOK, J Quinn (5–2); 2, Bahamian Pirate (4-1); 3, Red Rosein (33–1). 11–8 fav Doberman. 10 ran. 1¾, 1¼ (K Mahdi) Tote: £4.30; £1.10, £3.60, £11.10. Dual F: £24.20. CSF: £18.94

1.20 (6f) 1, ELWAY PRINCE, Dean McKeown (11–1); 2, Ambitious (Even fav); 3, Love Quinn (6–1). 9 ran. 7, 8, (Mrs N Macauley) Tote: £3.60; £1.70, £1.10, £1.20. Dual F: £3.40. CSF: £5.47.

1.50 (6f) 1, PADDOCK INSPECTION, N Day (20–1); 2, Jazzmix (6–1); 3, Centigenburnbrush (13–2). 8–2 fav Glasionbury. 14 ran. Nk, 1 (G Lewis) Tote: £23.00; £9.20, £3.20, £1.80. Dual Forecast: £94.00. CSF: £119.98.

2.20 (1m) 1, DAUNTED, G Duffield (13–2); 2, Philistello Lady (16–1); 3, Estiree (13–2). 2–1 fav Glow. 11 ran. 2½, 1 (G L Moore) Tote: £4.20; £1.60, £4.20, £1.10. Dual F: £32.10. CSF: £102.81. NR: Oh So Grand.

2.50 (1m 4f) 1, RANDOM KINDNESS, A Clark (11–8); 2, First Master (10–1); 3, Opera Buff (14–1). 4–9 fav for Victory Bond. 7ran. 2¾, 1¾ (R Ingram) Tote: £11.80, £1.40. £2.30, £2.00. Dual F: £84.80. CSF: £103.44.

3.20 (7f) 1, LAST REPUTATION, J D Smith (6–1); 2, Butrinto (7–1); 3, The Green Grey (3–1 fav); 4, Gadge (14–1) 16 ran. 1¾, shd. (B Hills) Tote: £7.60; £2.40, £2.60, £1.60. £3.50. Dual F: £16.30. CSF: £45.51. Tricast: £111.71.

3.50 (7f) 1, BUTTARASSIR, P Norton (11–8 fav); 2, Hyde Park (3–1); 3 Caversfield (14–1). 15 ran. 4, 2, (G L Moore) Tote: £2.50; £1.70, £2.10, £3.00 Dual F: £8.70 CSF: £9.39 Tricast: £49.26 NR: Lord Sky.

PLACEPOT: £778.00.

QUADPOT: £58.00.

LUDLOW

1.10 (2m½ 1, BARLEY MEADOW, N Horrocks (6–1); 2, Dubai Pelican (12–1); 3, Stretaching (33–1). 4, Galloping Gene (7–2 fav). 16 ran. 8, 1¼, 8, (R Ford) Tote: £7.70; £1.80, £2.70, £13.70. £1.70 Dual F: £37.10 CSF: £63.72. Tricast: £2,018.70

1.40 (2m½) 1, BIBBINGHURST FLYER, A Thornton (2–1 fav), 2, Sherwood Boy (3–1); 3, Down The Yard (10–1) 11 ran 2, 6 (R Dickin) Tote: £3.00; £1.30, £1.60, £3.20 Dual F: £2.60. CSF: £7.03. Tricast: £37.58

2.10 (2m½ 1, MAZILLO, R Johnson (5–1); 2, Roots One (4–5 fav); 3, Rochebaru (6–2). 9 ran. 1¾, 9 (Ian Williams) Tote: £9.00; £1.10, £1.10, £1.10 Dual F: £2.30 CSF: £7.15 NR: C D Boy

2.40 (3m 4f) 1, INFLUENCE PEDLER, R Massey (9–2); 2, Party Animal (4–1); 3, Go Go Henry (15–8 fav) 9 ran 2, 3 (Miss K George) Tote: £6.00; £2.60, £1.40. £1.20 Dual F: £11.40. CSF: £16.05.

3.10 (3m½ 1, KNIGHT'S CREST, A Alizzeo (5–1); 2, Perpetual Motion (5–1); 3, Highbeath (3–1 fav) 7 ran. 6, 1¼ (R Dickin) Tote: £8.20; £2.60, £3.00 Dual F: £14.00 CSF: £21.34.

3.40 (2m 5f 110yds): 1, NATIVE RECRUIT, A Maguire (5–4 Fav); 2, Lady Prunella (9–1); 3, Sleepless Lad (10–1) 12 ran 15, nk. (D Nicholson) Tote: £1.30; £1.20, £1.70, £1.90. Dual F: £7 60 CSF: £9 08. NR's: Fountain Bank, Grate Times, Yorkshire Edition.

4.10 (8m Hcp) 1, KILTULLA LAD, R Dunwoody (7–2); 2, Cenglot Nagging (5–1); 3, Silk Vestments (2–1 fav). 14 ran. 2, 1¼ (P Hobbs). Tote: £3.10; £1.50, £3.70. £1.70. DF. £12.60. CSF: £32.32

PLACEPOT: £13 40 QUADPOT: £7.30.

TAUNTON

1.00 (3m 110yds) 1, THE WRITER, D Gallagher (12–1); 2, Ten Of Diamonds (11–8 fav); 3, Happy Minstrel (15–2). 10 ran 8nd, 17. (G Shenwood) Tote: £19.90; £2.20, £1.10, £2 50. Dual F: £17 70. CSF: £29 81.

1.30 (3m 1f) 1, KILLING TIME, W Marsden (10–1); 2, Balfour Lady (13–2); 3, Bright Solfege (9–1) 5–1 fav Fabian. 14 ran 4, 1¼ (A Carroll) Tote: £11.70; £2.90, £2 00, £2 00 Dual F. £56 70 CSF £63 07. Tricast £590.00

2.00 (3m 5f) 1, KING OF SPARTA, C Maude (10–1); 2, Commercial Crusader (6–2); 3, Redleaf (14–1) 6–2 fav Piper's Rock 11 ran 3, shd (J Portman) Tote £13 30; £3.10, £1.60, £4 20 Dual F: £31 60 Trifecta: £2,356 30. CSF: £52 65 Tricast: £564 84 NR Miramare.

2.30 (3m 1f) 1, PRINCE OF INDIA, R Wakley (15–2); 2, Geo Bee Bay (11–2); 3, Mighty Byrne (15–8 fav) 10 ran. 15, 5 (J Bailey) Tote: £10 30, £2 90, £1 90, £2 10 Dual F: £23 60. CSF: £46 40

3.00 (2m 5f 110yds) 1, VICAR'S VAKE, Mr R Fonrisiel (11–4 fav); 2, Tony's Mist (10–1); 3, Oenia (14–1); 4, Distant Storm (11–2). 16 ran. 8, nk, 1¼ (K Bishop) Tote: £3 50; £2 00, £8 70, £1 40 Dual F: £9 50 CSF: £29 18. Tricast: £335 87

3.30 (3m½ 1, WISHING WILLIAM, J Culloty (9–4 fav); 2, Oliver Beckett (12–1); 3, Suitable (8–1) 10 ran 21,3, (Miss H Knight) Tote: £4 10; £1 50, £3 30, £1 90 Dual Forecast: £28 10 CSF: £26 94 Tricast: £133 49

4.00 (2m 1f Hcp) 1, FOOTSTEN HERO, J Culloty (4–1); 2, Gravity Flow (5–1); 3, Reboarsite (33–1). 6–4 fav Barneys Ball. 11 ran 1¾, 2¼ (V Dartnall) Tote: £3 90; £1 10, £5 40, £5 70 DF: £38 60 CSF: £35 19

JACKPOT: Not won. Pool: £19 916 07 carried forward to Cheltenham today

PLACEPOT: £71 10

QUADPOT: £14 30

● Channel 4 and Saab are combining with Cheltenham to stage a jockeys' championship on televised races throughout the jumping season. The Premiership points total will be based on a points system (10 for a win, 6 for second, 3 for third) with double points awarded at the Festival meeting. The winner will get £10,000 plus the use of a top of the range Saab for a year

Jockeys under fire on whip

Chris Hawkins

KEVIN FROST, training manager of the Northern Racing College in Doncaster, has added fuel to the current whip controversy by condemning Tony McCoy and Adrian Maguire who have both been in trouble with the stewards this week for over-zealous use of the stick.

Frost has criticised the jockeys as being "poor role models" for up-and-coming youngsters, saying: "They are fine examples for trying hard and their will to win is phenomenal but not when they are continually breaking the rules.

"Whether you agree with the rules or not they have to be adhered to. Jockeys use the whip in the forehand position far too frequently — we have a video that we show of Willie Carson who was a great exponent of using it in the backhand position."

Vodafone have agreed to continue their sponsorship of the Epsom Derby until the year 2002. United Racecourses announced the £3.5 million deal yesterday with managing director Sue Ellen commenting: "This is great news for British racing.

Results

Golf

TAIWEIYO MASTERS (Golemba, Japan) Leading first-round scores (Japanese unless stated): 68 E Herrero (Col), S Kawaguhi, N Serisawa. 69 F Minoza (Phil), S Yokoto; T "Jet" Ozaki; R Mackay (Aus). 69 M "Jumbo" Ozaki, N Tanaka; S Kaisyama; D Ishii (US); K Takahashi, A Cattani (GB) Also: 70 Kim Jong-duck (S Kor), R Goosen (SA), D Howell (Eng). 71 P Teravainen (US), D Clarke (Ir) 72 Chen Tze-chung (Taiwan), Yeh Chang-ing (Taiwan), J-N Olazabal (Spl; L Westwood (Eng) 73 T Hamilton (US), Z Moe Myanmar. M O Meara (Eng), J Sluman (US) 74 S Ginn (Aus), G Marsh (Aus) 76 C Parry (Aus)

Tennis

ATP KREMLIN CUP (Moscow): Quarter-finals: A Clement (Fr) bt B Latrasu (Can) 6–3, 7–5, G Ivanisevic (Cro) bt L Burgsmuller (Ger) 6–2, 6–1; T Johansson (Swe) bt G Grant (US) 6–2, 6–1. Doubles: J Palmer/J Tarrango (US) bt P Haarhuis/M Knowles (Neth/Bah) 4–6, 6–1, 7–5; B Lan-sau/A O'Brien (Can/US) bt T Sjang Schalkwijk/J van Lottum (Neth) 7–6, 6–3; Y Kafelnikov/D Vacek (Rus/Cz) bt J Grabb/R Stoltz (US/Aus) 4–6, 6–3, 7–5

ATP STOCKHOLM OPEN: Second round: T Enqvist (Swe) bt K Carlsen (Den) 7–6, 6–4; M Gustafsson (Swe) bt J Hrebec (Slovak) 6–3, 4–6, 6–1; D Nestor (Can) bt C Pioline (France) 6–3, 3–6, 6–3. Q Haarebski (GB) bt V Spadea (US) 6–1, 6–4.

WTA ADVANTA CHAMPIONSHIP (Philadelphia) Second rounds. N Tauziat (Fr) bt L Raymond 6–2, 7–6; A Frazier (US) bt P Schnyder (Swit) 6–3, 6–1.

LTA LADIE'S CHALLENGER (Hyde), Second round: S Sapsford (Aus) bt N Cohen (Surrey) 6–0 6–2. J Pullin (Sussex) bt M Zasagli (It) 6–4, 6–3. T Satyshire (Kent) bt J Gee (Ger) 6–4, 7–5. P Mandula (Hun) bt L Latmer (Warks) 7–6, 6–3. K Gross (Devon) bt M Bunt (Ger) 6–0, 6–2. P Mitchell (Ger) bt S Black (Yug) 6–3, 0–6, 6–4. J Wolfe (Ger) bt J Ward (Middx) 6–3, 1–6, 7–5. F Lubbesi (It) bt L Jelfs (Oron) 7–5, 6–3

Basketball

EUROLEAGUE Group A: Saratov 83 Pau Orthez 86 (aet) **Group B:** Efes Pilsen 81 Maccabi Tel Aviv 74 **Group D:** Ulkerspor 64 CSK Moscow 91

Chess

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ZONAL (Andorra) Round Six: C Bauer (Fr) & A Moles (Eng) K: J Speelman (Eng) X I Edimov (It) X: J Emms (Eng) 1 A David (Lux) 0; J Magem (Sp) 1 M Hebden (Eng) 0; P Wells (Eng) 1 D Attandi (It) 1; A Kosten (Eng) 0 D Gercia (Sp) 1. Leaderes Miles, Bauer, L van Wely (Neth), L Comas (Sp) 4½. Also: Emms, Speelman 3½; Hebden 3; Wells, Kosten 2½

Ice Hockey

NHL: Detroit 6 St Louis 2, Florida 4 NY Rangers 1; New Jersey 3 Montreal 0; Toronto 3 Edmonton 2, Anaheim 5 Carolina 4 (ot); Dallas 0 Phoenix 2.

Squash

PAKISTAN OPEN (Karachi): **Finals: A Khan** (Pak) bt G Fylding (Can) 15–8, 11–10, 15–9, 13–15, 15–8.

Weightlifting

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS (Lahti, Fin): **Men 69kg:** 1, P Jeliazkov (Bul) snatch 160 (kg (world rec) clean and jerk 190 0, total 350.0kg; 2, G Tzolkis (Gr) 155 0/160 0/337.5, 3, W Jianhui (China) 157 5/162 5/340 0; 4, G Boevski (Bul) 152 5/157 5/337.5, 5, V Leonidis (Gr) 150 0/155 0/335 0; 6, A Matveev (Rus) 147 5/155 0/332 5; 7, E Lavranov (Bela) 155 0/175 0/330 0; 8, Y Cunfeng (China) 145 0/185 0/330 0; 9, M Dodda (Rom) 147 5/170 0/322 5, 10, E Baimas (Fin) 145 0/177 5/322 5

Fixtures

(7.30 unless stated)

Football

FA CUP: First rounds Man City v Halifax (7.45), Swansea v Millwall (7.45).

RYMAN LEAGUE: Second Division: Abingdon Tn v Chalfont St Peter.

LEAGUE OF WALES: Caernbran v Rhayader Town.

FAI NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier Division: Bohemians v UCD (7.45). Bray Wndrs v St Patricks Ath; Waterford v Shelbourne (7.35)

Rugby Union

ALLIED DUNBAR PREMIERSHIP ONE: Sale v West Hartlepool.

WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE: First Division: Aberdlery v Merthyr (7.0)

ANGLO-WELSH FRIENDLY: Bath v Swansea

● A tool ligament injury to Donna Kelley may have cost England their chances of joining the Chitty Hotels no-match badminton tour as China won a 3-2 series lead after a 3-2 victory at Portsmouth, writes Richard Jago. Kelley's Commonwealth gold medal-winning doubles partnership with Joanne Goode was beaten 15–9, 15–4 by Lu Ying and Gao Ling, prompting the Derbyshire player to comment: "I had a brace on the injury and I think I may have taken it off too soon."

It meant the two victories for Simon Archer, in the mixed doubles with Goode, and in the mens doubles with Chris Hunt, came too late to save the match England had hoped to win. Kelley's loss in last night's fourth match of the series was taken by the former All England doubles champion Sara Sankey.

● Sale's England wing David Rees steals a Premiership game for the first time this season in tonight's match against West Hartlepool. England have decided to hang on to Tom Bainn, another Sale wing, so Matt Moore will switch flanks against West Hartlepool to accommodate Rees, on the bench at Leicester Irish last weekend.

The All Black Jon Preston makes a Bath debut tonight in an Anglo-Welsh friendly at the Recreation Ground against an understrength Swansea. Preston lines up at flyhalf as Bath parade 10 international capsite World Cup commitments ruling out the likes of Jeremy Guscott, Mike Catt and Kevin Maggs.

● Bulgaria's Plamen Jeliazkov set world records for the snatch and the total lift in the 69kg division at the World Weightlifting Championships in Lahti, Finland yesterday. He set a record for the snatch with a lift of 160kg, beating the previous mark of 158kg set by China's Wan Jianhui. Then Jeliazkov's clean and jerk of 190kg snatched the record set by the International Weightlifting Federation when the weight categories were readjusted at the start of the year. His total for the two lifts of 350kg was also a world record

● Barcelona confirmed yesterday that they are chasing Benfica's teenage midfielder Hugo Leal. The 18-year-old Leal has been in impressive form in this season's Champions League and is seen as one of the great future hopes of Portuguese soccer. But the prodigy has a contract with Benfica until 2004 and has also signed serious agreements with the Spanish club Atletico Madrid.

● Croatia's World Cup striker Goran Vlaovic is ready to leave Valencia. Vlaovic underwent surgery for a groin injury in August. He feels he is now fit to return to action but is being ignored by the Valencia coach Claudio Ranieri after playing only seven minutes of league football this season.

KEEPING TRACK 09064 700 +

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The Guardian INTERACTIVE

Southwell (A.W.)

	CHRIS HAWKINS	TOP FORM
12.05	Silent Warning	Silent Warning
12.35	Tancred Times	Tancred Times
1.05	Pip's Addition	Topton
1.40	Most Respectful	I'm Tef
2.15	Lady Caroline	Red Venus
2.50	Love Diamonds	Eyeballs Out
3.25	Druridge Bay	Druridge Bay
3.55	Love Academy	Love Academy

All-weather, Fibresand, left-handed track of 1¼m with 3f run-in.
Going: Standard. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Seven day winners: None.
Blinkered first time: 2.15 Stutton Gal Visored: 1.40 Wild Lily.

12.05 IRIS AMATEUR RIDERS' HANDICAP
1m 6f £1,914 (13 declared)

[illegible]

12.35 CARNATION CLAIMING STAKES
6f £2,295 (18 declared)

[illegible]

1.05 DAFFODIL HANDICAP (DIV 1)
7f £2,495 (16 declared)

[illegible]

1.40 CARNATION CLAIMING STAKES (DIV 2)
6f £2,295 (15 declared)

1 (12) 120000 I'm Tef (17) (D) T Easterby 3-8-13 ... R Winston (5) ★ ●90
2 (9) 031410 Most Respectful (23) (CD) N Tinkler 5-8-11 ... Kim Tinkler 84
3 (14) 415000 Cape Hope (127) (D) S Bowring 3-8-9 ... G Strange 78

[illegible]

2.15 MAIDEN AUCTION STAKES 2YO
5f £2,306 (17 declared)

[illegible]

2.50 TULIP NURSERY HANDICAP 2YO
7f £2,853 (14 declared)

[illegible]

3.25 LILY SELLING STAKES 2YO
1m £1,958 (16 declared)

[illegible]

3.55 DAFFODIL HANDICAP (DIV 2)
7f £2,495 (16 declared)

[illegible]

Betting: 11-2 Love Academy, 7-1 Marsamata, Kingdom Ruby, Theatre Magic.

Cheltenham Jackpot card

	CHRIS HAWKINS	TOP FORM
1.15	Cavalero	Cavalero (nap)
1.50	Premier Generation	Explain This
2.25	Golden Hello	Forestal
3.00	Moscow Express (nap)	Song Of The Sword
3.35	M. The Third (nb)	Lucky Town
4.05	Papo Kharisma	Papo Kharisma

Oval, left-handed circuit of 1½m with 350yds run-in. A testing, undulating track with stiff fences.
Going: Good to soft, good in places. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Seven day winner: 4.05 Papo Kharisma.
Blinkered first time: 3.00 Shore Party; 4.05 Quango.
Visored: 1.15 Strong Boost.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F-Flat.

1.15 REGENCY FINANCIAL PLANNING AMATEUR RIDERS' HANDICAP CHASE
3m 1f £6,840 (6 declared)

[illegible]

1.50 MURPHY'S IRISH STOUT NOVICE H'CAP HURDLE (SHOWCASE & TRIFECTA)
2m 110yds £7,458 (17 declared)

CH4

[illegible]

2.25 MITSUBISHI SHOGUN HANDICAP CHASE
2m £10,124 (5 declared)

CH4

[illegible]

3.00 STEEL PLATE AND SECTIONS NOVICE CHASE
3m 1f £9,531 (5 declared)

CH4

[illegible]

3.35 SPORTING INDEX CROSS COUNTRY CHASE
3m 7f £17,588 (14 declared)

CH4

[illegible]

4.05 MARCHPOLE CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS' HANDICAP HURDLE
2m 5f £7,783 (22 declared)

[illegible]

Newcastle runners and riders

	CHRIS HAWKINS	TOP FORM
12.55	Free	Free
1.30	Bobby Grant	Bobby Grant (nb)
2.05	Arrange	Arrange
2.40	La Riviera	Danbys Gorse
3.15	Woodfield Gale	Joe Buzz
3.45	Gaelic Blue	Gaelic Blue

Left-handed circuit of 1¾m with 220yds run-in. Steady rise in home straight of 4f makes this galloping track a true test of stamina.
Going: Good to soft, good in places. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Seven day winners: None.
Blinkered first time: None. Visored: None.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F, Flat.

12.55 NORTHERN RACING JUVENILE NOVICE HURDLE 3YO
2m £2,285 (8 declared)

1 212 Free (13) (D) Mrs M Reveley 11-5 ... P Niven ●90
2 603 Crosby Don (34) E Weymes 10-12 ... R Guest 78
3 6 Hunt Hill (17) J J O'Neill 10-12 ... R McGrath 76
4 Konker (F11) G M Moore 10-12 ... J Callaghan —
5 372 Simon Victory (36) Mrs V Ward 10-12 ... W Marston 71
6 Another Wyn-Bank (F74) M Fell 10-7 ... D Bentley —
7 6 Hiding Place (34) W Storey 10-7 ... G McCormack (5) 64
8 P40 Total Tropix (90) Mrs S Bradburne 10-7 ... Mr M Bradburne (5) 78

Betting: 5-6 Free, 11-2 Hunt Hill, 8-1 Crosby Don, Konker, Simon Victory, 10-1 Hiding Place, 14-1 Total Tropix, 16-1 Another Wyn-Bank.

1.30 GOSFORTH PARK NOVICE CHASE
3m £2,892 (12 declared)

[illegible]

2.05 STANNINGTON NOVICE HURDLE
2m 4f £2,411 (14 declared)

[illegible]

2.40 NEWCASTLE FLOORING HANDICAP CHASE
2m 110yds £2,762 (10 declared)

[illegible]

3.15 NEWCASTLE FLOORING HANDICAP HURDLE
2m 4f £2,836 (8 declared)

[illegible]

3.45 ST MODWEN HANDICAP CHASE
3m £3,501 (6 declared)

[illegible]



End of an era . . . Schmeichel prepares to announce his retirement from English football DAN CHUNG



Up front

Niall Quinn

Tyranny by cards and a clear need for give and talk

THE bottom line is that there has been a terrible breakdown in communication. For once, this is not a reference to the Evans-Houllier saga at Liverpool but to a more serious problem: the one driving players and referees apart.

The divide, as Paolo Di Canio showed, has become dangerous. And while we as players could do with keeping our mouths shut, referees should start opening theirs.

Too many these days are unapproachable, coming across as aloof and arrogant. Sadly the healthy tradition of officials mixing with the teams after the match has virtually disappeared. The results have been damaging.

The breakdown of socialising has increased the sniping. Players and managers like to let off steam after a game and because they cannot discuss decisions with the referee, they turn to attacking them in the papers — or, in Di Canio's case, on the pitch.

Players appreciate that officials have an impossible job made even harder by the all-seeing, all-knowing cameras. But it is not unfair to expect an explanation for decisions.

There is nothing more frustrating than being waved away like a schoolkid. That sort of arrogance creates an "us against them" feeling and once that happens, players tend to exaggerate their anger. Yet you can barely breathe without getting into trouble with David Elleray. A couple of seasons ago he sent off my Sunderland team-mate Richard Ord for swearing after an incident with Derby's Igor Stimac.

Stimac was coming out with 100 words a second but was never going to see red because Elleray does not understand Croatian. Anyone who tried to make him see sense was waved away with yellow cards.

There is no logic in that type of behaviour. Players react angrily if a team-mate gives them a bad pass or makes an error, so why should refs be different?

The best referees are those who give as good as they get. Keith Cooper, sadly retired now, was a classic example. If you told him he was having a nightmare he would turn round and say: "Not as much as you, son. You're having the worst game I've ever seen." You respect refs like that; it is as if you are in it together.

But unfortunately they are a dying breed. Tell some of them nowadays that they have made a bad decision which may cost you your place in the team and they laugh in your face. Perhaps it should cost them their place, too. If a footballer plays a bad game he knows he might not be involved the next week, so he is constantly on his toes. Yet a referee's main concern is where he will be sent the next week.

It seems there needs to be some competition among referees. We have referees' assessors, so why not publish the tables and treat them according to their performances? Those who do poorly would pay for it and the good ones would get the plaudits they deserve.

And they do deserve them because their job has become so difficult, not only because of the endless slow-motion replays but also because of changes to the rules and the faster pace of the game.

Not long ago players could take out their frustration on their opponents; now it seems to be the referee. When I started at Arsenal I knew the first challenge against some of the Oxford players, for instance, would leave me with an elbow in the head or studs down my legs.

Your only concern was to look after yourself. But now that aspect of the game has gone you end up targeting the ref. On top of that, players' patience is not what it was. The quicker pace and growing quest for success mean tempers flare more easily.

Professional referees would be a step in the right direction. Of course they would not get every decision right but going full-time would give them time to visit training grounds and build up relationships and spread confidence.

As it stands, we see a ref for 20 minutes at pre-season training to explain the new laws. That is a poor return when their decisions can make or break careers.

I am sure everyone would also benefit if at least some of the jobs were given to former players, good ambassadors who know how the game works and how to respond to all the whingeing.

OF course it would be off-putting for someone who has played in the world's top stadiums to start refereeing on a park pitch on a Sunday. But, if allowances were made for former players, I would not rule out taking that route myself. I know I would miss the buzz of visiting the big stadiums and dealing with the top guys, which should make it clear I am writing this for the referees' sake. Before it gets out of control, let's get together and sort things out. Then we can find something else to moan about.

sheets in 43 league and Cup appearances. That was when Ferguson said Schmeichel was at the peak of his powers, 10 of those lock-outs coming in the last 13 Premiership games when Manchester overhauled Newcastle United.

Schmeichel's immense presence has inspired those in front of him, intimidated opposing supporters and annoyed opposition supporters. He was named Player of the Tournament when Denmark won the 1992 European Championship, but while his international career continues, Schmeichel has accepted his United one is ending.

"I will become another forgotten player," he said. "Just like Eric Cantona. Gary Neville once said this is a cynical club and that's true. Great players like Bryan Robson, Steve Bruce and Mark Hughes come through, then they disappear." The revolution moves on.

Irish anger as Fifa backs clubs

Michael Walker

THE Republic of Ireland's preparations for next Wednesday's vital European Championship qualifier against Yugoslavia in Belgrade were thrown into disarray late last night when Fifa ruled the Republic could not invoke the five-day ruling which would have prevented players like Roy Keane and Denis Irwin playing for Manchester United at Old Trafford tomorrow.

Fifa had previously "suggested" the Republic could enforce the ruling but have now bowed to pressure from clubs like Charlton, who have tried desperately to keep Mark Kinsella and Sasa Ilic in the their team for tomorrow's game at home to Middlesbrough.

The Republic's manager Mick McCarthy was bemused. "I thought the five-day ruling was cast in stone; this is another nail in the coffin of international football. In my day it was the ultimate accolade to play for your country."

McCarthy has said all along that he does not blame individual club managers, saying he would "do the same in their position" but privately the FA of Ireland is furious about the perceived U-turn. Within the FAI it has been said that had a bigger footballing nation been affected, Fifa would have enforced the ruling.

The Republic will definitely be without Liverpool's defender Phil Babb. McCarthy has omitted Babb, who has not played since injuring a bone in his back after running into a post in the game with Chelsea five weeks ago.

Andreas Kopke, the German goalkeeping veteran of three World Cup finals, is expected to join Rangers early next week until the end of the season on a free transfer from Marseille.

Kopke, 36, is set to arrive in Glasgow on Monday for talks with the Rangers manager Dick Advocaat, who is anxious to secure a high-class goalkeeper with his first choice, Lionel Charbonnier, out for the season with a serious knee injury.

Manchester United will begin tearing up their Old Trafford pitch on Sunday, after tomorrow's game with Blackburn. They are putting down new turf because the surface, only recently laid, has churned up alarmingly since last weekend.

● The FA has pulled England's Under-18 squad out of the Uefa qualifying tournament in Israel next week because of the unrest in the Middle East.

I that for 40 years."

Rugby Union

England World Cup game not the ticket

Robert Armstrong on tomorrow's match shunned by the fans

ENGLAND's gate receipts for tomorrow's World Cup qualifier against the Netherlands at Huddersfield are expected to be less than the average takings when the Nationwide First Division soccer club play at the ground.

So far, only 6,500 tickets at £15 or £20 have been sold by the Rugby Football Union for a low-key international that seems unlikely even to half fill the 24,000-capacity McAlpine Stadium.

The limited box office appeal of the Dutch to northern rugby fans combined with the live transmission of the game by ITV will deprive England of the vociferous support they have received in recent seasons at Twickenham. Even a 10,000 attendance would fall well below the 14,240 crowd Huddersfield's First Division match at home to Ipswich attracted last Saturday.

The RFU, which dropped its customary top price from £35 to £20 in the hope of increasing the gate, is resigned to regarding the fixture as a loss leader which will at least stimulate grass-roots interest in rugby union within the Yorkshire heartland of rugby league.

Local organisers, though, believe the £20 and £25 ticket prices for the Italy game on November 22, also at the McAlpine Stadium, may deter potential supporters. In contrast, Scotland will charge a top price of £15 for their World Cup games against Spain and Portugal at Murrayfield.

Meanwhile, the England squad came through their training session at Leeds University rugby ground without adding to an already worrying injury list which may keep Lawrence Dallaglio out of the Italy game.

The new friendship between union and league will be formally marked at a meeting between Peter Trunkfield, the RFU president, and Tom Smith, the president of the Rugby Football League, at the George Hotel in Huddersfield on Monday. The two men will shake hands in the same room in which the historic split that led to the formation of the rugby league took place in 1895.

Springboks fear Quinnell

Ian Malin

SOUTH AFRICA were in London yesterday to prepare for tomorrow's meeting with Wales at Wembley, talking up the opposition and talking down northern hemisphere referees.

The world champions, unbeaten in 14 Tests including the 96-13 humbling of Wales in Pretoria last June, have singled out Scott Quinnell as a danger man tomorrow.

The Springboks lock Mark Andrews, who wins a record 60th cap, said: "He is looking in peak form and, unless we subdue him early on, he could make us pay the price. We have to get deep into their territory and pin them on the back foot because, if they get their tails up, we will be the ones defending for our lives."

The South Africa coach Nick Mallett is also concerned that under Graham Henry's tutelage Wales will be a completely different proposition from the understrength side overwhelmed last summer.

Mallett said: "It looks like it is going to be wet and windy on Saturday and they have got just the players for that type of occasion. With players like Scott Gibbs, both Quinnell brothers and Rob Howley, they make a real tough prospect."

But, despite scoring 10 tries in beating Glasgow Caledonians on Tuesday, the Springboks have been furious over the way they have felt the laws of the game have been interpreted since they arrived in Britain.

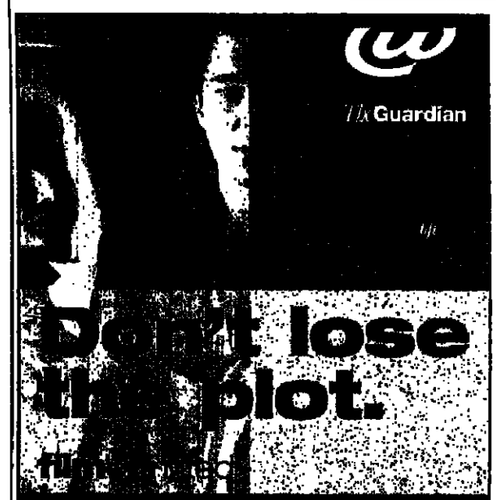
Andrews added: "It has the potential to ruin the game of rugby at international level. There has to be a pool of referees who are taught to interpret the rules in the same way. We have found a real problem with the interpretation of situations such as rucking and mauling."

Last night the Glasgow flanker Jason White was given a 16-week ban for stamping on the South African fly-half Braam van Straten in the Springboks 62-9 win at Firhill.

The touring New Zealand Maoris, who ominously went one better than the Springboks in scoring 11 midweek tries against Edinburgh Reivers, have made four changes for tomorrow's meeting with Scotland at Murrayfield.

SOUTH AFRICA: Montgomery; Terblanche, Snyman, Smith, Rossouw; Hendall, Van der Westhuizen; Garvey, Dalton, Kempson, Andrews, Otto, Erasmus, Venter, Teichmann (capt). Replacements: Du Toit, Van Straaten, Swanepoel, Stinstad, Boome, Le Roux, Cronje.

NZ MAORIS: Cashmore; Rehana, Ralph, Gibson, Berryman; Brown, Duggan, Lidgard, McFarland, Meeuws; Maxwell, Coe, Flavell, Muir (capt), Marsh. Replacements: L MacDonald, R MacDonald, Osborne, Akurangi, Feek, Makin, Cribb.



Keeping up with what's going on at this year's London Film Festival could be hard. But don't worry out, log on – to the official LFF website brought to you by the Guardian. You'll find information about all the festival movies, a full festival schedule, past, present and future, which you can personalise as it won't forget to note each day logging your own personal line-up of films or cut a seat beside.
www.lff.org.uk

Sport in brief

Squash

The legendary Khans of Pakistan, who have dominated the sport for much of the past 40 years, unexpectedly struck again yesterday to save one of their country's long-standing records, *writes Richard Jago.*

Amjad Khan, the 20-year-old nephew of the eight-times World Open champion Jansher Khan, caused a surprise by winning the Pakistan Open in Karachi, thus preventing the title from falling into foreign hands for the first time. Unseeded Amjad won the final 15-8, 11-15, 15-9, 13-15, 15-8 against the Canadian Graham Ryding.

Rugby League

Castleford yesterday continued their ambitious team-building programme by signing Michael Eagar, a tough Australian centre who played for Warrington last season, *writes Andy Wilson.*

Billiards

Junsuke Inoue, a 58-year-old Japanese player, has been suspended from competition for two years after testing positive for taking a banned muscle-building drug.

Ice Skating

The champions Marsha Poluliashenko, 17, and Andrew Seabrook, 20, from Swindon, defend their pairs title today at the British Figure Skating Championships in Milton Keynes, *writes Molly Sutlek.*

Sports Books

The Guardian cricket writer David Hopps and Donald McRae, a contributor to the paper and a former winner, are both on a short-list of six for the William Hill Sports Book of the Year.

William Hill short-list: Addicted, by Tony Adams with Ian Ridley; We're Right Behind You, Captain, by David Hopps; Winter Colours, by Donald McRae; Manchester United Ruined My Life, by Colin Schindler; Angry White Pyjamas — An Oxford Poet Living with the Tokyo Riot Police, by Robert Twigger; and Behind the White Ball, by Jimmy White with Rosemary



Rusedski keeps on track with his faithful serve

Marcus Christenson in Stockholm

"GREG RUSEDSKI threatens to end public's interest in tennis." That was the main consensus of a large article in one of Sweden's main newspapers here yesterday.

The author, referring to Rusedski's powerful serve and its tendency to deny spectators entertaining rallies, named a number of proposals on how to make life more difficult for the hard-serving players on the tour.

One was to increase the height of the net, another to reduce the area of the service box, and a third to allow players to serve only once.

None of these alterations was, of course, introduced here yesterday in the Stockholm Open and Rusedski duly served his way into the quarter-finals, beating the American Vince Spadea 6-1, 6-4.

Rusedski was 5-0 up after a mere 13 minutes, combining great serving with patient ground strokes to outclass the man ranked 44th in the world.

To be fair, Rusedski's game consists of more than just his serve; otherwise he would not have beaten Pete Sampras in three straight sets in Paris last week or advanced to the last eight here.

His backhand has improved significantly but there are still aspects of his game that need improving. For instance, in the second set Rusedski, leading 3-2 and serving, lost his concentration after the umpire intervened and called his first serve a "fault". The Briton lost the game and was then fortunate to break back in what proved a decisive seventh game.

Spadea failed to hold his serve despite having four game points and, when the American threw away four break points in the following game, the match was practically over. Rusedski still needed five match points to seal the victory, his second in successive meetings with the unpredictable American.

"I think that Vince is a very difficult opponent," said Rusedski. "He is one of the talented Americans coming up and I expected a tougher match.

"He played better in the second set, he upped his game and started serving better. I knew the first-set result wasn't really a true reflection of what he can do out on a tennis court."

Although both Tim Henman and Rusedski are looking to win their third title of the year, the chief aim of the Stockholm event is to accumulate enough points to qualify for the ATP Tour Championship finals in Hanover starting a week on Monday. Yevgeny Kafelnikov, playing in Moscow, is also in the shake-up for the two remaining places and today will be crucial with all three contenders in action.

Henman plays Sweden's Magnus Gustafsson, whom he has beaten in all their four previous meetings, and Rusedski faces the Canadian Daniel Nestor, a surprise winner over France's Cedric Pioline in three sets here.

Today's most important match, however, will be played in the Kremlin Cup where Kafelnikov is looking to advance to the semi-finals. He plays Guillaume Raoux of France, the world No. 60.

Eyeballing . . . Greg Rusedski has now served himself up a quarter-final meeting with the Canadian Daniel Nestor

Rugby League

Upwardly mobile Trinity meet terms of Super League

Andy Wilson

IT WAS third time lucky for Wakefield Trinity yesterday as their application to join Super League next season was accepted.

Trinity earned the right to apply for a franchise by winning the First Division grand final in September but the Rugby League Council and the game's Independent Franchise Panel had deferred a decision at hearings in the past three weeks. Wakefield's original application fell well short of Super League's minimum standards but the panel met again yesterday and concluded that Trinity "have now provided the information necessary to satisfy the majority of the requirements".

Their application was based on a planned move to a new stadium next to the M1 for the 2000 season, with club officials confident that they will secure planning permission next week. In the meantime they will bring their dilapidated Belle Vue home up to Super League's minimum standards by providing extra seating and covered areas.

They are also in discussions with Barnsley FC about taking televised home games to Oakwell.

An even greater task confronting Trinity is to build a squad capable of competing. They have already lost two members of their team in Garen Casey, who has joined Salford, and Sonny Whakarau, now retired.

In addition Matt Fuller and Roger Kenworthy, Australians who played key roles in last season's success, have still to accept new deals and Adam Hughes, their talented centre, has returned to Leeds after a one-year loan.

"We've already done a fair bit of spadework on new signings, both domestically and from overseas, on the basis that we would get promoted," said Andy Kelly, the coach. "I'm sure that we will be able to get a squad together that will at least be competitive."

Paul Broadbent, Sheffield's Challenge Cup winning captain who was transfer-listed last month, and the Halifax pair of Martin Pearson and Richard Marshall are likely targets. The bad news for traditionalists is that Wakefield, while remaining Trinity, will shortly unveil an alternative, more modern nickname.

Their promotion, along with the introduction of Gateshead Thunder, takes the number of Super League clubs to 14.

Golf

Tee cup storm

Elspeth Burnside

MARIE LAURE de Lorenzi and Tommy Horton, the respective captains, were locked in battle over the placements yesterday on the eve of the second Praia D'El Rey European Cup between Europe's women and the senior men's tours in Portugal.

Last year there was a near mutiny by the women who claimed the divide was too wide in the second-day fourball series. They lost all five matches by massive margins and it paved the way for the men to lift the trophy 13-7.

Horton conceded his side had probably had an unfair advantage 12 months ago but added: "It's difficult to get it right and this year the women's team is much stronger. Some of them hit it huge distances but we do want it to be a good contest."

Nevertheless De Lorenzi, one of six Solheim Cup players in the line-up, was adamant that the placements for yesterday's pro-am still greatly favoured the men. She cited the long 11th as an example. "It's 513 yards for the men and they can get up in two. We're 25 yards forward and none of us can get there. That's not fair."

Following a meeting between the captains and officials, a decision on placements is expected this morning. But De Lorenzi added: "I still reckon they're going to have too great an advantage."

Boxing

Eye risk forces Graham to hang up his gloves



Graham . . . bombed out

HEROL GRAHAM has retired after being told he risks going blind if he fights again. The 39-year-old had been due to meet David Starie for the vacant British super-middleweight title tomorrow week.

"I went to the optician. He looked and looked again. When that happens you know something is wrong," Graham said. "I'm seeing a specialist later but it's likely it's a detaching retina which could need surgery or laser treatment."

Graham had three attempts at winning a world title, losing to Mike McCallum and Julian Jackson before retiring in 1992 and after a comeback in 1996, Charles Brewer last March.

● Kevin Lueshing, initially ruled out of tomorrow's fight with Nicky Thurbin after a brain scan, has now been cleared to fight but the British light-middleweight title will not be at stake.

Team talk

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				Wolves	96

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The Guardian INTERACTIVE

The Guardian Friday November 13 1998

JUST OUT

Fear And Loathing In Las Vegas
★★★½
Dir: Terry Gilliam. With Johnny Depp, Benicio Del Toro, Ellen Barkin. 118 mins, cert 18.

Henry Fool
★★½
Dir: Hal Hartley. With Thomas Jay Ryan, James Urbaniak, Parker Posey. 137 mins, cert 18.

Insomnia
★★★½
Dir: Erik Skjoldbjaerg. With Stellan Skarsgård, 97 mins, cert 15.

Blade
★★★½
Dir: Stephen Norrington. With Wesley Snipes, Stephen Dorff. 120 mins, cert 18.

Fire
★★★
Dir: Deepa Mehta. With Shabana Azmi, Nandita Das. 104 mins, cert 15.

The Knowledge Of Healing
★★
Dir: Franz Reichle. With the Dalai Lama. 90 mins, cert U.

Hope Floats
★
Dir: Forest Whitaker. With Sandra Bullock, Gena Rowlands, Harry Connick Jr. 114 mins, cert PG.

Left Luggage
★
Dir: Jeroen Krabbé. With Isabella Rossellini, Laura Fraser, Marianne Sägebrecht. 93 mins, cert PG.

The Odd Couple II
★★★
Dir: Howard Deutch. With Jack Lemmon, Walter Matthau. 97 mins, cert 15.

CRITIC'S CHOICE

1 My Name Is Joe
Love, life and the worst football team in Glasgow: Ken Loach's Cannes winner lives up to expectations.

2 Antz
A star-studded cast sheds its vanity in DreamWorks's lavish computer-animated feature.

3 Insomnia
Stellan Skarsgard plays a steely detective who gradually loses his mind in this stylish Nordic thriller.

4 Snake Eyes
Nicolas Cage is at his sleazy best in Brian De Palma's suspense thriller.

5 Fear And Loathing In Las Vegas
Johnny Depp and Benicio Del Toro recreate the legendary trip.

★★★★★ Unmissable ★★★★ Recommended ★★★ Enjoyable ★★ Mediocre ★ Terrible

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The Guardian INTERACTIVE



Gaby Wood hitches a ride with Terry Gilliam and his Gonzo friend

Night of the Hunter

FILM OF THE WEEK: FEAR AND LOATHING IN LAS VEGAS

The early work of Hunter S Thompson led to the coining of a new term, "gonzo journalism". The phrase has come to mean, more or less, anything written by Hunter S Thompson, but its original meaning is very precise. "Gonzo", apparently, is South Boston Irish slang for "the last man standing at a drinking marathon".

It's a fitting description of the style of Thompson's classic, Fear And Loathing In Las Vegas, now a film directed by Terry Gilliam. It's also a fairly apt summary of the plot. Only, as anyone familiar with the legend will know, the marathon involves drugs as well.

Raoul Duke (Thompson's alter ego) and his "attorney" set off for Las Vegas with "two bags of grass, 75 pellets of mescaline, five sheets of high-powered blotter acid, a salt-shaker half full of cocaine, and a whole galaxy of multi-coloured uppers, downers, screamers, laughers... and also a quart of tequila, a quart of rum, a case of Budweiser, a pint of raw ether and two dozen amyls". The rest of the book, and the film, is taken up with the consumption of these substances in Vegas, which looks like a hallucination at the soberest of times.

Thompson's book is accompanied by some equally legendary drawings by Ralph Steadman — a series of jabbering, crawling, ghoulish, reptilian visions, with his trademark splashes of ink. So part of the challenge of bringing the book to the cinema screen must be that it already has a definite visual style.

Gilliam respects Steadman all the way through, but never mimics him. The splattering credits sequence is like a self-contained homage, almost getting the Steadman look out of the way so he can move on to his own ideas. Gilliam's idea, at least for the first hour or so, seems to be to make the story cartoonishly aware of itself. There is such an abundance of references to take in — Steadman's style, Thompson's Hawaiian shirts, his rants, his habits, his real-life aura — that there's considerable mileage to be had just playing on what's already there.

Johnny Depp has perfected Thompson's spidery, woozy walk and his jerky, paranoid looks. He mutters through his cigarette holder so you can hardly understand him, and when covering a race in the desert — the ostensible journalistic reason for the trip — only looks out for his beer glass. At one point in the film, he stops and sees himself in a nightclub, himself being played by the real Hunter Thompson.

Benicio Del Toro, who seems to have trebled his weight since he played the cool cat in The Usual Suspects, is Depp's impossibly revolting sidekick. He hulks around, parading his bulging belly and showing the top of his Y-fronts. Somehow he manages to perform an astounding piece of drug-induced acrobatics, walking and bending over backwards at the same time.

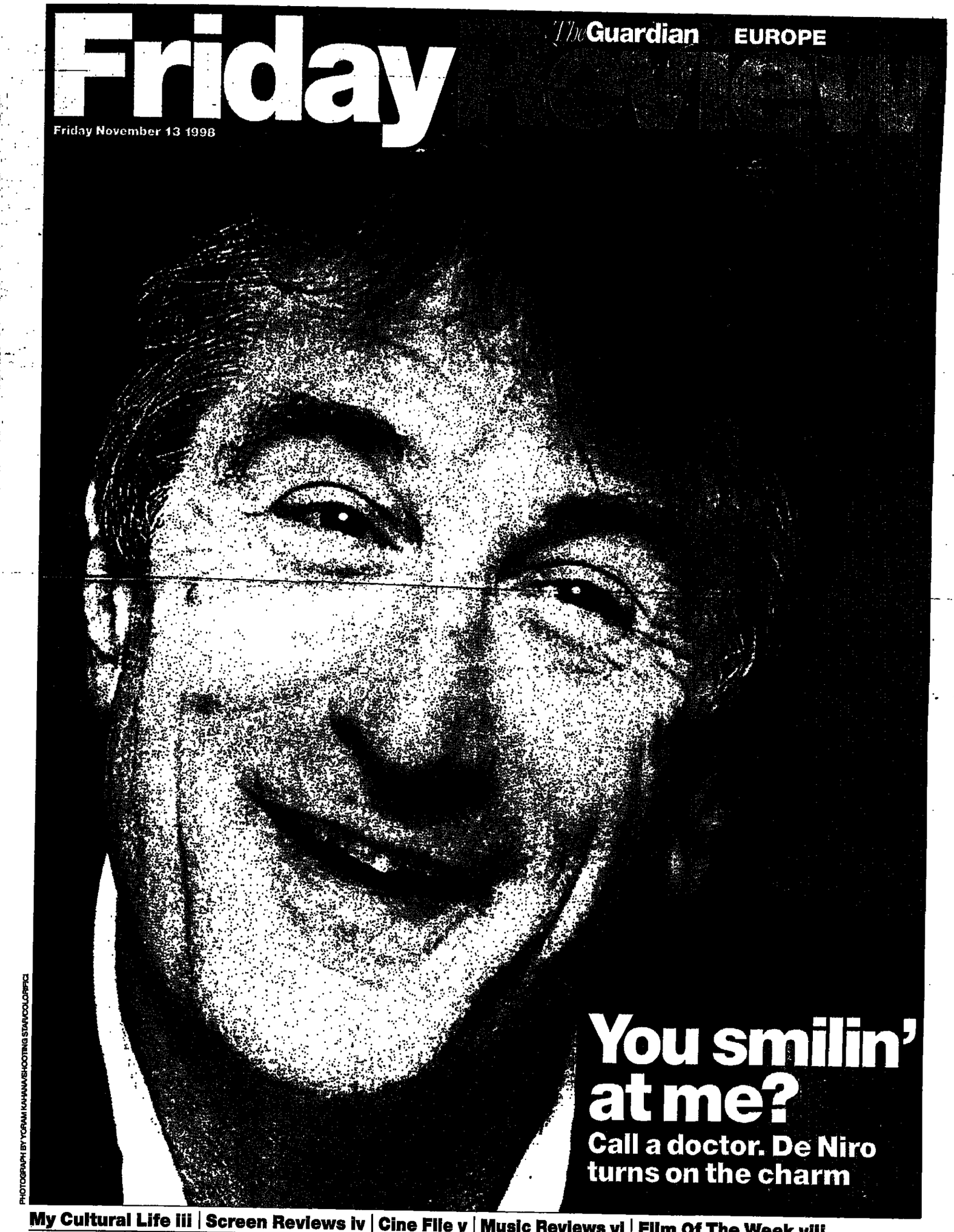
After a while, though, the ups and downs don't come frequently enough even for the audience, and there's an element of the tedium usually found in someone else's druggy experiences. Gilliam's films are often visually overwrought (The Adventures Of Baron Munchausen, Brazil, Twelve Monkeys), and here, too, it's like looking at the same dazzling thing for too long. He reaches a level of intensity and stays there, so that the trashed hotel rooms can only get more trashed — and the characters likewise. There is nothing but a mild sense of what diverse effects the multiple drugs have in the film, and the audience may need a wider variety of visual stimulants as well.

Johnny Depp has perfected Thompson's spidery, woozy walk and his jerky paranoid looks

In 1969, the Observer ran a short article about Terry Gilliam's animations for "this new Monty Python's Flying Circus show". "He epitomises," it said of Gilliam, "a whole section of the younger generation, the less self-righteous ones who aren't satisfied with the world but make jokes, not war, and don't preach". Thompson's book was written two years later, and there's an argument for saying Gilliam got there first — with hallucinogenic images, with rebellion, with irreverence. Now, for some reason, he finds more cause for preaching, perhaps because there's no war to replace with jokes, perhaps because people won't know what he means.

The film of Fear And Loathing is heavily laden with reminders of Vietnam — on TV, in strips of footage — to provide a temporal and political context for the mind-boggling. It turns the film, rather oddly, into a period piece. The script is all from Thompson's written words, but the book is quite different. For all its spewing substances, the writing is often clipped and pacy. Thompson's fans already know this, but it's worth reminding ourselves that the fearsome legend also has a craft. Where the film ends with a meditation on where the sixties went wrong, that section of the book is less sombre. "Ah," writes Thompson after those words, "this terrible gibberish".

Friday
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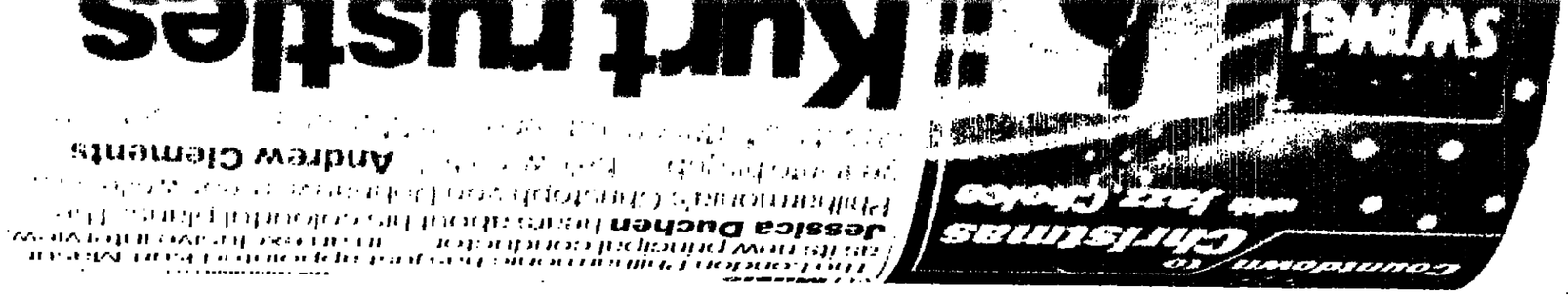
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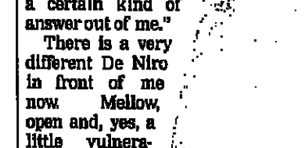
You smilin' at me?
Call a doctor. De Niro turns on the charm

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So his personal life is bizarre and he's phoned in a few roles of late — but talk of Robert De Niro losing the plot is bunkum. He tells **Sarah Gristwood** that his mind is now on higher things, like directing

I'm no wise guy

Robert De Niro says it's all so ludicrous, and gives you that famous eye-crinkling grin. It's impossible not to grin back. He's talking, in typically vague terms, about "a new cycle in my life", nothing more, nothing less. His conversation has always needed decoding. He seems to be telling me about his relationship with the media, his relationship with his work, his relationships full stop. For De Niro, he's being remarkably forthcoming. Most surprisingly, he seems to be finally admitting that acting is no longer his priority.

It's become a standard complaint that his parts these days are smaller and so much more frequent that the bad are beginning to outnumber the good. A few years ago, Guardian journalist Stuart Jeffries asked him whether his work for his production company TriBeCa had diluted his acting work, and received the following ear-bashing. "Don't be a fucking wise guy, man. Don't tell me negative stuff. I'm not interested in that. You wanna talk about the movies than, yeah, ask questions that are decent and not trying to get me annoyed and get a certain kind of answer out of me."

There is a very different De Niro in front of me now. Mellow, open and, yes, a little vulnerable. Actually, I've seen quite a lot of him in recent years — four interviews and six press conferences is my own score — and he seems to be mellowing by the meeting. Once a man of mystery, he has become Mr Accessibility on the festival circuit.

In a world in which celebrities are exhibited only at press "junkets", the journalist's best hope is that over a period of time, layer by layer, you can build up a more accurate picture of a star. Cannes once, for Cop Land. Venice — where we are now, to talk about Ronin — repeatedly. ("I'm Italian in my soul." Big grin.) He was in Berlin earlier this year, and, for once, there really was something to say. At the press conference in Berlin, an Australian journalist asked De Niro about his recent experience while shooting Ronin in Paris, when he was questioned for nine hours about possible connections to an international call-girl ring. "I have never paid for a woman in my life. And even if I had, it wouldn't be a crime," he said. But far from being offended, he seemed eager to talk about this episode: "That was an awful experience and a totally unnecessary one. A lot of people have told me they were embarrassed. It just shouldn't have happened. I sent the judge a letter saying I was going to be there and they made a big drama about it, came bursting into my room, seven or eight cops, which was totally unacceptable.

"I love Paris and I love the French, but the judicial system there with the judges having so much power is deplorable. You're guilty until you're proven innocent. This particular judge seemed to be carrying out some sort of witch-hunt. Maybe he thought he was in a movie..."

Typically De Niro was at Berlin to promote three new films — a modern adaptation of Great Expectations, as the convict Magwitch, Quentin Tarantino's Jackie Brown, and Wag The Dog, in which he and Dustin Hoffman advise a US President caught up in a sex scandal — the product of De Niro's own TriBeCa company. Two of these were supporting roles. "I like to do a supporting part," he said, "because you can go a little further. A cameo can be more lively."

In the nineties, as the De Niro roles have multiplied, so has critical hostility. The Observer likened him to "an ageing sportsman who's still got the skill but none of the ambition", while the Telegraph said much of his recent work seemed "to have been done by an impostor hired to raise money".

The mixed reception for his new work is in stark comparison to the run of films that made him the actor's actor in incendiary lead roles, from Mean Streets in 1973 to his oddball cameo period of the mid-eighties, when he would turn up briefly and memorably in the likes of Brazil, Angel Heart and The Untouchables. In these two decades, he received two Best Actor Oscars, for The Godfather II and Raging Bull, and four nominations.

The film-writer David Thomson summed up his unique screen presence: "He's as threatening and ungraspable as a sweet-faced madman who pours a torrent of talk over you on the subway."

De Niro once told me: "I don't dislike critics. I've been kind of fortunate with them in the past. Sometimes they're the only people you can trust. They do try to be supportive, contrary to what you hear. But when critics say nasty things, they do it with a vehemence. They make you angry.

"I'm not going to defend myself. I get paid well, I'm happy. A writer writes with a pen, an artist works with his own materials, but when you make a movie it costs money and you're lucky to be doing it. If it works, great. I still feel that pressure of not wanting the company actually to lose money, but the important thing is that the movie lasts. When a scene's done right, it's always there. If it doesn't work — what are you going to do?"

'Actors have to grovel in the mud and jump through hoops. That's why I want to direct now'

He said this after GoodFellas, however, the last film in which his performance gained universal praise. It was also the first interview, the start of his availability and his years as an enigma. And the start of the dodgy years, some might say.

So what about now, after the critical brickbats? "I enjoy what I'm doing," he says. "Time can pass. Two years can go by and you haven't done anything. Which is OK, but for me at this point..." His voice trails away.

"I'm getting older [he's 55]." "There are so many things I want to do, and I'm getting anxious whether I'll be able to do them." Does he worry about exposure? "Sometimes, maybe. But I spent a lot of time earlier in my career not doing anything, so I'm making up for lost time. And I have expenses, so I can be swayed." Such as maintaining the TriBeCa Film Centre, which he and a partner, former Warner executive Jane Rosenthal, set up in 1988 as a home for the city's film-making community.

An eight-storey New York landmark in a previously anonymous warehouse district, it includes post-production facilities, a screening room, the fashionable TriBeCa Grill and the offices of Miramax,

Would you take a ride with this man? De Niro (right) as Travis Bickle, the killer cabbie in Taxi Driver, and (top left) in Ronin



An idealist with clout . . . the arrival of Kurt Masur has the LPO celebrating

programming and audience development. Masur may have behind him more than half a century steeped in tradition and experience, but this imposing figure — tall, white-bearded, precisely the popular idea of a great conductor — has never been one to live in the past.

His musical repertoire stretches all the way from Bach to Ornette Coleman; and, asked about his plans for the LPO, he homes in on the issues that preoccupy all arts practitioners today: the need to attract new audiences and to build a sound relationship with them, to update the whole matter of concert-giving for the 21st century. "We have to be aware that the world everywhere is changing, cultural life is changing, and we have to be aware also to meet the expectations of the audience. So therefore you have always to find out what those expectations are, what the audience would need in order to be educated, for instance, to listen to the music of our time, or to unknown pieces. You have to build up a trust between the orchestra and audience.

"What we feel is to give the audiences very interesting programming, to give a very colourful direction in every way. Audiences' knowledge is much higher than it was 50 years ago. But on the other hand, we know that we have a loss of education in the schools about the arts; so we have also constantly to find out what we more can do in concerts for young people and concerts perhaps for parents with kids. We have a lot of ideas about programming, about new relations with the audience, new forms of concert. I think life will be not boring!"

From the orchestra's point of view, Serge Dorny explains: "It means a great deal for the orchestra to have a musical figurehead: it is of course key to the orchestra's further development. I believe the partnership with Masur has huge potential: there is the right chemistry with the orchestra and the administration. We have similar ideas, not only music-centred but person-centred. This is enormously valuable because it concerns cultivating the right spirit to give extraordinary performances. And to be able to work with someone who brings with him such a richness of tradition, which he will add to the tradition the LPO has, is extremely rewarding."

But in the current gloomy financial climate, questions are bound to be asked about how a London orchestra can afford such an appointment. World-class conductors do not come cheap. Dorny has set up a designated fund for the "chair" of principal conductor, to help solve any such problem.

"In the present fundraising climate one has to be quite creative in trying to consolidate orchestras and arts institutions in general," Dorny explains. "Creative approaches have to be discovered not only in programming but in funding systems and business commitments. The involvement of a principal conductor is key to the development of an orchestra and in order to secure the future of an orchestra it is important to cultivate artistically and financially the right environment for a principal conductor. This is partly why we believe that such a fund has to be developed."

Audiences can sample the "special relationship" of Masur and the London Philharmonic at the Royal Festival Hall over the next fortnight. Arriving home from their tour today, meanwhile, the LPO are cracking open more German beer.

The LPO with Kurt Masur perform Beethoven's Eighth Symphony and Grieg's Incidental Music for Peer Gynt, with Simon Callow and Rebecca Egan, at London's Royal Festival Hall on November 19. On November 27 they perform Shostakovich's First Symphony and Strauss's Don Quixote; Masur will give an open interview in the RFH auditorium afterwards. Booking office: 0171 960 4242.

pigeonhole him as the composer who looked back to romanticism and forward to modernism. That's one of the reasons that Luciano Berio plundered the Second Symphony for his Sinfonia, one of the most successful orchestral works of the last 50 years, which uses the symphony's scherzo as the framework on which to construct a whole collage of quotations from composers who followed in his wake — Mahler as the only begetter of those later works.

But Dohnányi doesn't accept that view of Mahler's achievement. "I agree very much with Leonard Bernstein," he says, "Mahler was an end not a beginning. But the very strange thing is that he was the beginning of a whole school of interpretation. The marking and directions he put in his scores are the first we have from a composer who conducted his own scores — they are meticulous and you have to follow them."

The arrival of the new century, Dohnányi feels, will enable us to locate Mahler much more precisely in his time; it will be 100 years since the Fourth Symphony then. "The symphonies are fin de siècle pieces; the things in Schoenberg that come from Mahler are the things which are looking back. The whole time Mahler lived in was retrospective; people felt a lot of self-pity. It was an intensely creative time, producing a huge body of great art, but it also meant looking backwards, because looking at other people is a totally different story from looking at yourself. The Viennese always were and still are self-destructive and full of self-pity, yet able to produce the most gifted artists.

"There were composers, like Schoenberg, who were able to escape from all that, who were able to look forward and break with the past. Music history is absolutely unique in that respect; at one moment Schoenberg is writing Verklaerte Nacht and Webern composing Ein Sommerwind, both late Romantic pieces, and the next they are producing music that breaks completely with what has gone before. I don't think anything like that happened in any other art form, and it was really because of the new century — everything was changing, politically and socially; there were cars and aeroplanes, and you could not be Schopenhauer on the one hand and Einstein on the other. It was always a mixture between looking forward and looking back."

But Schoenberg's other most famous pupil, Alban Berg, was less uncompromising. "That's the greatness about Berg," says Dohnányi, "he wanted to be accessible. Schoenberg almost didn't want to be accessible. He was the one who started the movement of 'it doesn't really matter if people want to listen to this — they will one day.' And Webern even told one of his pupils that the day would come when everyone would whistle his tunes in the street — what an overrating of human ears!

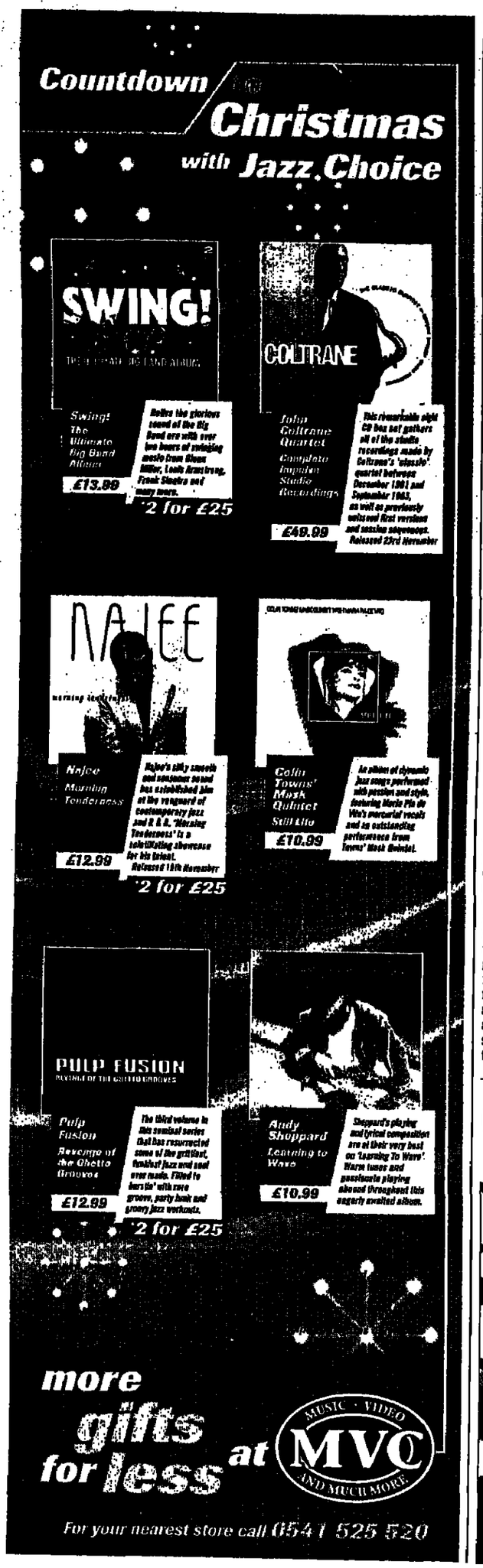
"Human beings are much more able to remember visual things than musical ones; that's why they go to Tosca 57 times so they can hum along. With modern works I always tell people not to try to remember the music but to enjoy the moment. If only they would only open their minds and their ears they could listen to Webern and Boulez and not be disturbed by them. People say they don't understand those composers, but that's not true, it's just that they just can't hum along, and you feel uncomfortable if you cannot remember something.

Berg, though, communicates. It was a stroke of genius, thinks Dohnányi, for Berg, pushed by Schoenberg, to have chosen Wozzeck as the subject of his first opera. Dohnanyi has conducted the score memorably at Covent Garden and on disc. He has recorded Lulu too, though only in its unfinished two-act form, and remains very suspicious of performing the three-act version in Friedrich's Cerha's completion.

'If only people opened their minds they could listen to Webern and Boulez'

"It is wonderful to know it," he says. "But more and more people go back to two acts, even the most fanatical ones. The first scene of the third act is too long and it is a mess. If someone had the courage to cut in all three acts they would produce a piece that fits in the theatre. Berg was much too much of a theatre man — he must have had some feeling that it was not quite what he wanted, and would have advised us to do something about Lulu."

Christoph von Dohnányi conducts a concert performance of Berg's Wozzeck at London's Royal Festival Hall tomorrow, and further concerts in the Philharmonia's Mahler and Vienna series on November 21 & 26 (booking: 0171 960 4242).



The London Philharmonic has just appointed Kurt Masur as its new principal conductor — in an exclusive interview, **Jessica Duchen** hears about his colourful plans. The Philharmonia's Christoph von Dohnányi, meanwhile, is a year into his job — below, he tells **Andrew Clements** about his forthcoming series on Mahler and modernism

Kurt rustles

Earlier this week, the residents of Dusseldorf may have been surprised to see groups of very merry musicians wending their way through the city centre in partying mode. The London Philharmonic Orchestra, on tour in Germany, had heard the long-awaited news: Kurt Masur is to be their new principal conductor. The German maestro will immediately assume the title of principal conductor designate; from September 2000 he becomes principal conductor for an initial five years. The LPO, with no figurehead of its own on the podium since 1996, had plenty to celebrate. Great conductors are increasingly rare today: Leonard Bernstein, Herbert von Karajan, and more recently Georg Solti and Klaus Tennstedt are all dead. Kurt Masur, along with the LPO's president Bernard Haitink, is one of the last to carry with him the full weight of the German symphonic tradition.

Add to this the humanistic ideals which nearly won Masur a nomination for the East German presidency. For more than two decades the doyen of Leipzig's cultural life as "Kapellmeister" of the Gewandhaus, he metamorphosed into a prominent civic leader in 1989. He had been central, as one of the founders of the opposition group New Forum, in the gathering protest against the East German government — but he was simultaneously stringent about advising against violence. As the streets of Leipzig filled with protesters and the armed forces were put on alert, ready to shoot, Masur opened the Gewandhaus doors and invited the demonstrators inside, ushering into existence the first open forum in the GDR for 40 years. The wall duly fell without bloodshed. Masur was a national hero. He never seriously considered standing for the presidency, but he had undoubtedly served as an agent towards transformation.

The strength of his leadership can carry this transformative effect into the concert halls. Since 1991, Masur has been music director of the New York Philharmonic, one of the most challenging and prominent positions in the orchestral world, to which he is contracted until 2002 (he left the Gewandhaus orchestra, and moreover to draw in audiences and stimulate them into new enthusiasm with fresh programming and related events called Philharmonic Forums. It would seem that Masur is an idealist; and idealists with clout are in short supply.

'We have a lot of ideas about new forms of concert. I think life will not be boring!'

So why should Masur come to London? He first conducted the London Philharmonic at the invitation of Klaus Tennstedt, the orchestra's music director through the mid-1980s; the two conductors were close friends for more than 50 years. "When I worked with the London Philharmonic under his leadership, I was very touched by this type of music-making," Masur recalls. "So I was convinced I could have the same kind of special relationship with the orchestra. I think we have achieved already a spirit that will make it very fruitful for the future to work together."

Last season, Masur conducted the LPO in a concert dedicated to Tannstedt's memory — a moving occasion which, he says, was "proof, besides my own feeling, that the orchestra and I already have a very close musical relationship. I am glad," he adds, "because I like the orchestra very much — it is very well educated for the main repertory, the flexibility and the understanding of style are at an extremely high level and there is a very open spirit."

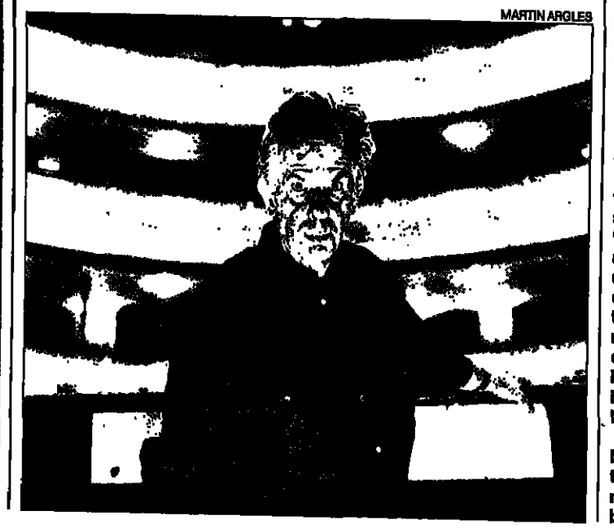
Besides that, Masur seems to be much in accord with the current direction of the LPO, now strongly focused by its chief executive and artistic director Serge Dorny towards a broad spectrum of

in 1998). When he celebrated his 70th birthday last year, in a concert at the Lincoln Center with the New York Philharmonic, USA Today wrote: "Obviously he has changed the orchestra. Not so obviously, he has changed us, the audience . . . Masur arrived from the isolation of the former East Germany, bringing new meaning to the word integrity."

Masur was able to control and inspire this notoriously fierce

Oh, Vienna

MARTIN ARGLES



Christoph von Dohnányi became the Philharmonia's principal conductor a year ago, adding the London appointment to his responsibilities in Cleveland, where he has been in charge of that remarkable orchestra now for 16 years, and to his role as an advisor to the Orchestre de Paris. His pedigree as an interpreter of the Austro-German tradition is exemplary, everything from Haydn to Henze.

His first London appearances this season focus on one of his specialities within that lineage. "Mahler & Vienna — Beginnings and Endings" is not a festival, he says, just a sequence of themed concerts. The series kicks off tomorrow with a concert performance of Berg's Wozzeck, with a cast led by Franz Hawlata and Deborah Polaski; performances of Mahler's Second Symphony and Das Lied Von Der Erde follow.

It's very tempting to see Mahler as the pivot about which the whole history of Austro-German music turned at the beginning of the century, to

Life and loves of a he devil...

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De Niro with Grace Hightower, from whom he is rumoured to be separated



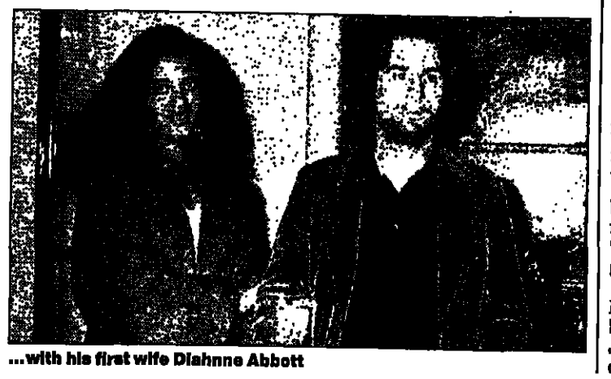
...with the twins he fathered with a surrogate mother for Toukie Smith



...with Toukie Smith, a former girlfriend



...with his stepdaughter Drina, Diahnne Abbott's daughter, and his son from his marriage to Abbott (second from right)



...with his first wife Diahnne Abbott

the company that has transformed independent US cinema. The area has risen like a balloon in the wake of the centre, and as its recent 10th anniversary approached, further expansion plans were in place. TriBeCa recently won film rights to the musical Rent and completed a mini-series on the life of mobster Sammy "The Bull" Gravano. The company's production record is a very mixed bag, with Night And The City — a disastrous re-make in which he appeared with Jessica Lange — on the debit side. But the successes — artistic or financial — include De Niro's directing debut, A Bronx Tale, and films in which he appeared, such as Wag The Dog and Martin Scorsese's box-office hit Cape Fear.

Interestingly, for A Bronx Tale, his only film as director so far, he cast himself as the good, moral father of family. "That's another side of myself that I do believe exists. But psychos in pictures have their validity. They scare you, they take you on a ride — and then you come out at the end. You wake up and know it's not real. They are like dreams in a way."

De Niro's box-office clout has never come near to his prestige, and he traditionally disparages money-oriented studios. As an entrepreneur, though, today's De Niro is a success story in different terms.

Being the defining movie icon of the seventies had its price. In the days of Mean Streets and Taxi Driver, every performance De Niro gave was an instant classic, prepared exhaustively. Famously, he flew to Sicily to listen to the locals read his lines for Godfather II, spent a year with the real Jake La Motta for Raging Bull and bought silk underwear from Al Capone's favourite shop for The Untouchables.

But today he shies away from questions about research and instead talks about his roles in terms of the number of weeks they'll take.

Does he still believe in the Method for which he is famous? "A moment might come that something will flash in your head, and it'll make the take. That's my Method. The Method is whatever works for you, as long as you don't hurt yourself or anybody else."

In Ronin, he plays one of a group of "ronin" (samurai or mercenaries by any other name) double-crossing each other in an ambiguous thriller directed by John Frankenheimer. "I'm not sure how people will perceive the movie. I wasn't sure whether I wanted to do it, but I saw that Frankenheimer was trying to make the material more than it was." He plays a tough guy, a loner and enough of an anti-hero to bring up the perennial question about so often playing the bad guy.

"Actors have ethics the way anybody else does. In fact, you have to be more aware of where you stand ethically. I don't want to be delinquent — it's more constructive to go learn a language in Europe — but I do often get cast in darker roles, and that's generally more interesting than the hero unless he's written really strongly.

"Characters with a mixture of black and white are usually the more interesting," he once told me, "but the most important thing is to get the humanity."

The best part of his new film Ronin — car chases apart — may be his on-screen relationship with Jean Réno. "If you dance, he'll come and dance with you," Réno says. "A man full of finesse, depth, contained violence, but also... of perversity. A very secret guy. He'll give you what he thinks you need to work with him, and you will discover exactly what he wants you to."

His private life has been rather fraught over the past couple of years — a secret marriage to former air hostess Grace Hightower last summer, followed by reports this year that they are now living apart, followed by the arrangement to father twins (via a surrogate mother) with former girlfriend Toukie Smith.

Not surprisingly, he's wary of the press. Indeed, at the festival he's surrounded by security to fend off the paparazzi. "They're like hornets, like jackals. Do you walk into a hornet's nest and allow them to bite you? No, you go the other way. But where I live in New York, it's manageable. People are used to me by now.

"I have my own life. I can't make myself available to every fan — it depends on the time, whether I'm busy. But I'm pretty nice to people one to one. I try to consider their feelings." It's true, too. At an earlier Venice, I remember him having drinks on the terrace of the Gritti Palace when two Japanese tourists wanted to take his picture. He said no. "I'm off duty — but sorry. How are you, good holiday?"

'I have never paid for a woman in my life... And even if I had, it wouldn't be a crime'

Is he worried about the quality of the parts he's offered these days? De Niro pauses. A long pause even by his standards. "It's all changed. It's difficult now." Which is an astonishing admission when you consider he has that history of threatening journalists who criticise his work. He mentions a couple of projects he is hopeful about — a TriBeCa movie in which he plays a Mafia boss who seeks help from psychiatrist Billy Crystal, and perhaps another one with his mentor Scorsese coming up.

De Niro's chief interest seems to lie elsewhere today. A second directing assignment is on the cards — he's been working on a script for some time. "But it has to be right. Especially for me."

Does he actually enjoy acting now? "Yeah, I do. I'm so used to doing it that it's become more fun, because you don't worry about the things you know aren't important. But I really want to direct. Because directing makes one think a lot more and I have to involve myself — make my own decisions, my own mistakes. It's more consuming.

"The actor's the one who has to get up and do it — grovel in the mud and jump through hoops. The trade-off is you have a few days free. But if you're directing, you have no time from morning to night." He sounds pleased at the exhausting prospect, and you suddenly realise he's looking for that passion he no longer seems to find in acting.

Ronin is released next Friday.

My cultural life



Mary Allen
Former chief executive of the Royal Opera House

For the past 10 years I've run arts organisations, so reading the high arts was part of my working week. I'm now writing but as Oliver Knussen, the composer, once said to me, "Mary, you're like a child reader: you can't help reading for pleasure". I'm trying to take up drawing. I might even go to some classes. It gives me supreme satisfaction, though I'm not terribly good. I'm reading a book called Drawing On The Right Hand Side Of The Brain about your right-hand side being creative and the left critical. It teaches you to draw upside down, left side and more. I live in the right. I've discovered I'm less hopeless than I thought.

I'm also planning to take up singing. I love choral singing and used to belong to a choir. It's a shame how quickly you can lose those skills.

I've just bought a piano and I'm getting my technique back. I used to have a very good teacher and can still teach myself to a certain extent. I want to catch up on film. It's so long since I've seen a thought about it. The Truman Show and Elizabeth sound great. Saving Private Ryan, Sound Vision and Cry The Beloved Country I've been told it's extremely good so I'll probably see that, too. Above all, I'm interested in Eyeborg films. To me, they're like a long epitaph in a novel compared with a short soundbite in a tabloid newspaper. They are more reflective and make different assumptions on the attention span of the viewer.

Recently I went to see the Almeida's Hey Porsephone! which was superb. Albee's The Play About The Baby was very thoughtful and Alan Howard was magnificent, but I always enjoy his acting.

Two events at the Royal Opera House stand out for me: La Traviata with Andrea Rost, and Harrison Birtwistle's Gawain. I sat down to watch both feeling shattered and thought I might be able to have a sleep. Within a few minutes I was wide awake, and by the end I felt as if I'd had eight hours' sleep. It was an infusion of energy and excitement. This is what you get when the arts are that good.

I love browsing in bookshops. I've just bought a pile of books: the latest from Rose Tremain and Peter Carey, and JG Ballard's Cocaine Nights — all wonderful writers.

A House Divided, by Mary Allen, is published by Simon and Schuster at £17.99. Interview by Caroline Egan.

Screen



The spy they put out in the cold

RUSHES

You know you're old when film directors start to look young. Samirah Makhmalbaf, 19, is the daughter of the acclaimed Iranian director Mohsen Makhmalbaf. Her brilliant film The Apple is out on December 26. The perfect Christmas present for everyone. Stephen Frears is turning the ultimate lads' anorak novel, High Fidelity, into a movie. After the disaster of Fever Pitch, it must be a relief for Nick Hornby to have a real pro on the job

The Belgian spy Marthe McKenna emerged from the first world war a national hero. Then her neighbours began to shun her. But why? **Paul Webster** travels to Flanders and uncovers a 50-year-old family secret

God knows, the Belgium town of Roeselare has little enough to recommend it. It has us to blame for that. In one of the many "big pushes" of 1917, British heavy artillery reduced it to rubble. You would think that this humdrum, slightly depressed Flanders town, would be keen to cling on to any bit of glamour it's got. But you'd be wrong.

Marthe McKenna was the nearest thing it had to a star. Her book, I Was A Spy, based on her real-life experiences as a secret agent during the first world war, was made into a classic film by Victor Saville. It was hailed at the time as the greatest espionage drama ever made. Marthe's subsequent best-selling cloak-and-dagger thrillers, which inspired resistance fighters in the second world war and created the caricature of the cultivated, sadistic Prussian officer, sold millions of copies. One, Lancer Spy, was also filmed, with George Sanders in the lead and given an added frisson when one of Marthe's hated enemies, an obscure cycling corporal called Adolf Hitler, became German Chancellor.

Churchill found her story so compelling that he "could not put out the light before 4am". He was



war minister when Field-Marshal Douglas Haig made special mention of her in despatches and later forwarded King George's gratitude when she was rescued from torture in a German prison. So great was his admiration for her, he even wrote the preface to I Was A Spy, which ran into 18 editions.

"Marthe McKenna fulfilled in every respect the conditions which make the terrible profession of spy dignified and honorable," he wrote. "She continuously obtained and sent information of the highest importance to British intelligence. She reported the movement of (German) troops; she destroyed or endeavoured to destroy ammunition dumps; she assisted the escape of British prisoners; she directed British aeroplanes... [bringing] death upon hundreds of enemies and oppressors of her country."

With Marthe as the star attraction, Saville's film was given gala openings all over Europe, including Paris, where Belgium's King Albert turned up to congratulate her. In photographs, she towers over the crowds, a broad woman more than six feet tall — the opposite, in fact, of the waifish Madeleine Carroll, who played her in the film.

But the most interesting old pictures of all were taken at the premiere in Roeselare, where local dignitaries turned out in dress uniform to salute what was then their unsullied heroine.

Yet go there today and you will find no mention of her in the town's exhibition about the Great War. Ask about her and you will be met with whispers that she was a double agent, a liar, a charlatan or worse. Marthe McKenna has been excised from memory. She is an embarrassment, a source of shame to this introverted community. But why?

They said she was a double agent and a liar

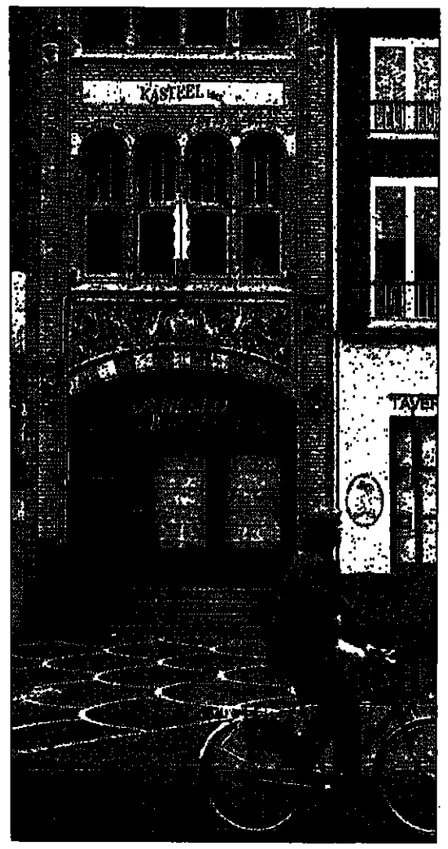
Town librarian Johan Vandekerkhove believes the puritanically Catholic locals turned their backs on her because she was "a heroine for some but a whore to others".

Even the kindest of those who now delight in debunking the Marthe myth say she was a conniving double agent, changing sides when the military tide turned and later marrying John McKenna, an officer in the Dublin Fusiliers who fought on the Ypres front. (It was McKenna, a dashing, blonde Mancunian, who ghosted I Was A Spy and a score of Marthe's other best-sellers when they moved back to England after the war. He was still writing in 1962, when, just before he died, he published a book of his own, appropriately enough, advising budding authors how to earn £20,000 a year.)

While there is something in all these opinions, the truth lies elsewhere. The Guardian has discovered that Marthe herself, having spent her last years as a virtual recluse — apparently shamed by her broken marriage — may have colluded in the destruction of her own reputation.

Roeselare's market square has not changed much since events described in I Was A Spy. The Dutch-gabled Kroon café, where Marthe worked with her parents and sister serving German soldiers, survived the terrible destruction when the town was taken two months before the Armistice. Across the cobbles is the town hall that housed the Kommandatur, and, a little further away, the 18th-century seminary, which was then a military hospital.

From these three buildings, Marthe's obtained the intelligence that revealed the impending use of mustard gas and enabled British bombers to wreck an ammunition train and German barracks. These were her greatest coups. Unfortunately, they missed Corporal Hitler, whose duties included delivering mail on his bicycle and whose pastimes involved painting picturesque local scenes.







Secrets and lies ... (clockwise from far left) Madeleine Carroll as McKenna (shown inset below) in I Was A Spy; the café in Roeselare, where McKenna worked in the first world war; a bar in Westrozebeke, the place where she was born and buried; her niece Rosanne

PHOTOGRAPHS: MARTIN GODWIN

Marthe was recruited in 1915 by the British secret service, which had several agents in the town. According to her own version, she volunteered after seeing the Germans execute a woman vegetable-seller in the market place for spying. Marthe, then 23, was taught simple codes and told to hand on messages to Belgian runners who penetrated the German lines.

The French historian, Pierre Miquel, was convinced that accounts of her most dangerous exploits were genuine. "Apart from routine information gathering from conversations she heard in the café, she was asked to keep a watch on a German ammunition train that ran through the town and eventually stole the timetable from the Kommandatur.

"A British plane blew it up while she watched from the ground. She also smuggled out plans of German billet areas which were flattened in another bombing raid, in which many soldiers died. Her most daring act was tunnelling under an ammunition dump and destroying it — sabotage that brought about her arrest after nearly two years as a spy."

Marthe — code-named Laura by her British handlers — spent 22 months in Bruges prison after a reprieve from execution because she had been awarded an Iron Cross for nursing Germen wounded after one of the air raids she had set up.

There is a good deal of mystification in I Was A Spy (Marthe herself admitted as much), but this does not explain why Roeselare adamantly refuses to recognise her now. It is surely not through prudishness, since the townsfolk were not overly spooked by her Mata Hari-style portrayal in Saville's film in 1933.

One possibility is a touch of pro-Germanism, left over from an equivocal second world war occupation of this stubbornly Flemish-speaking area. Down the centuries, it has been ruled by the Spanish, Dutch, French and now, in the words of a local joke, by the Belgians, leaving a legacy of general mistrust.

A retired town archivist, Michiel De Bruyne, now researching the case, typifies the scepticism in Roeselare over Marthe's true record. His main objection to her is that a secret daily chronicle that kept the most important events in the town during the war never mentions her exploits. "Even if she worked for the British, she can't have been trusted," he said. "She wrote a letter in 1915, which I have, telling her family she was working as a secret agent. Nobody talks about her here. Young people don't even know her name. Her books were written in England and have never been translated into Flemish."

Looking at the impressive collection of documents laid out before him, it is very easy to believe Mr De Bruyne. But when I visited the village of Westrozebeke, 10 miles from Roeselare, where Marthe is buried in the churchyard, a different story began to emerge. I had been told that relatives did not want to talk about her because of gossip that she was a prostitute — an insinuation which turned out to be completely untrue.

The woman who was closest to Marthe in her later years, her only niece, said the village was inordinately proud of her. Rosanne Moelaert-Parmentier showed me her aunt's Belgian, French and British honours, including Douglas Haig's personal despatch praising her "gallant and distinguished services". Among a collection of portraits was the handsome face of John McKenna, known in Westrozebeke as "L'Irlandais" after the country where his two sisters lived.

Rosanne inherited her aunt's English-style provincial house in Westrozebeke, where Marthe had settled with John in 1947 after leaving Manchester.

"My aunt had taken out British nationality and lived an English lifestyle, listening to the BBC and eating bacon and eggs for breakfast." But looking outside across the flat, rain-sodden autumn Flemish countryside, it was easy to see why McKenna quickly tired of life among an inward-looking farming community with its harshly unfamiliar language.

"After four years, he ran away with the neighbour's daughter who was a close friend of Marthe," Rosanne said, releasing the long-buried family secret to a stranger for the first time. "Marthe was shattered. They had shared so much together. John's sisters tried to keep in touch from Ireland, but when letters arrived she would weep at the mention of his name. Eventually my mother asked them to stop writing because it caused so much pain.

"That was the end. Marthe never spoke about her old life to anyone," Rosanne added, her eyes full of tears. "She suffered terribly from heartbreak and I don't think she cared what people thought of her past. She never even encouraged Westrozebeke, where she was born, to remember her, so why should Roeselare?" So were the adventures true? "Yes," said Rosanne, showing a Belgian defence ministry parchment awarding her aunt recognition for her intelligence work. "Marthe was a really brave, brave woman."

CINE FILE



Tamara Jenkins

What is the first film you saw?
The Wizard of Oz. I remember the scary monkeys and the house falling on the witch's feet.

What's your favourite film?
Sweet Smell Of Success, or Sunset Boulevard. Billy Wilder's films have a very black, bleak sense of humour.

When did you last walk out?
Seven. I was with a friend who had the flu and he just couldn't take it.

Your most erotic moment?
William Holden getting ready to dance and snapping his fingers in Picnic.

Favourite snatch of dialogue?
In Sweet Smell Of Success, they're trying to set up the prostitute character to screw this guy. She says: "What am I, a fruit bowl? What am I, a tangerine, waiting to peel?"

Which actor would you like to be?
Peter Sellers, Jackie Gleeson or Robert De Niro.

Which actress?
Rita Hayworth, Judy Davis and Emma Thompson. Thompson is smart, Davis is fabulously bold. Hayworth is stunning and she married Orson Welles.

When was the last time you cried?
Watching Olivier Olivier by Agnieszka Holland on video.

How did you find Robert Redford and how did he find you?
I met him in Utah at the Sundance Institute, a workshop for emerging film directors. I was very impressed that he understood my script.

Why do big breasts play such a prominent role in your film?
Because I have big breasts. The character has a neurotic relationship with her breasts and so do I. The point of the movie is that for a man it would be perceived as pleasure, for a women its about anatomical suffering.

Slums Of Beverley Hills, written and directed by Tamara Jenkins, and executive produced by Robert Redford, is released on November 27. Interview by Justina Hart.

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